Sunday, March 14, 2010 Vol. 21 / No. 96

• **Mikey Arroyo** is 1st nominee of security guards' party-list • Pastor Quiboloy says his 'initial vision' shows toss-up between Aquino and Villar **NEWS** • **Followers** of ousted Thai PM mass in streets to paralyze Bangkok **WORLD** • **RP-US** alliance plays out at Waldorf **GLOBAL PINOY** • **Denzel Washington** praises Fil-Am trainer **ENTERTAINMENT** • **Women** on the edge of breaking barriers **SIM**

PHILIPPINE Sunday INQUIRER

FOR FLAG AND COUNTRY Face of boxing champ Manny Pacquiao flaunt the Philippine flag during his weigh-in with Ghanaian Joshua Clottey in Texas. But there's only one star in "The Event," on today at 12:15 p.m. Manila time. AP

• **A day** in the life of a campaign **INSIDE PDI**
ELECTION EXTRA TOMORROW

Pacman heavily favored

RP's phenomenon fights a guy who has nothing to lose

By Roy Luarca

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS—FILIPINO BOXING ICON MANNY Pacquiao wants to add another glowing chapter to his fabled ring career, but Joshua Clottey, the Ghanian warrior who has nothing to lose in this fight, longs for lasting recognition.

On Saturday (Sunday in Manila), Pacquiao, regarded as the best fighter of his generation, stakes his World Boxing Organization welterweight crown against Clottey, a dangerous and durable fighter who has yet to be knocked out.

Though smaller and lighter, the 31-year-old Pacquiao has been tagged by oddsmakers as a heavy 6-1 favorite to retain his crown and hand Clottey his first ever knockout defeat.

But Pacquiao, who has stopped his last four opponents—David Diaz, Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton, Miguel Cotto—refuses to predict a knockout, even during Friday's weigh-in held outside the main entrance of the new and imposing Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

Pacquiao, who will be fighting in front of the largest crowd of his career, told the throng outside Cowboys Stadium that he is hopeful of a knockout.

"I can't promise a knockout, but I want to put on a good show for the people who support me all the time," Pacquiao told some 2,500 mostly Fil-American fans who trooped to one of the world's largest domed structures for the official weigh-in of the fight eard dubbed simply as "The Event."

The 32-year-old Clottey, after an initial unofficial try, stepped on the scales first and registered an exact 147 pounds, overthrowing suspicions that he had to struggle to make the weight. He was seen running and skipping rope in a thermal suit on Thursday, the eve of the weigh-in.

Pacquiao, the only fighter to win seven titles in as many weight divisions, came in lighter as expected at

INCHAM A13

REPORTERS' NOTEBOOK

'She came, she spoke, she left...'

FLOWER POWER Independent presidential candidate and environmental activist Nicanor Perlas relays his message to the locals at Agdao Public Market in Davao City on Thursday. EDD GUMBAN/INQUIRER MINDANAO

NOT EVERYONE IN JOSEPH "Erap" Estrada's camp is happy about the presence (or lack of it) of Makati Defensor Santiago as a guest candidate on his senatorial ticket.

For one, she is hardly ever present in the campaign sorties of the Pwersa ng Masang Pilipino's presidential candidate. The feeling—or at least two campaign stalwarts say so—is that she's just feeding off Erap's popularity and contributing nothing in return.

A rare appearance at a recent campaign rally in Bulacan, marked by Santiago's usual rapid-fire remarks in English, apparently did not help matters any.

DHI CAMI A10

Readers talk back

By Inquirer Research

THE INQUIRER'S "MY VOTE, MY TURN" ASKED INQUIRER readers to send in their thoughts on hot topics and issues that best define the 2010 election, character traits the next president should possess, political heroes the next president should emulate, and bad traits and political scandals the next administration should avoid.

The questionnaire was published in two waves—from June to July last year, and in February. In all, it elicited a total of 840 responses. The INQUIRER compiled and collated the answers.

Below we filled in the blanks with the readers' most dominant answers.

(Full story detailing the results of the study on Page A8)

MyVote.MyTurn.
HOW I WILL DECIDE
The Inquirer keeps me informed. The 2010 election is really about *change*.
Our next president needs to be someone capable of *moral, clean, credible leadership*
like *Cory Aquino*,
and not capable of *corruption*.
No one knows for sure what will happen. But I will make my vote happen.
INQUIRER

50,000 techies hired to help man PCOS machines

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ALTHOUGH THE OPPORTUNITY to cheat is considered very slim in an automated election, there can be no stopping a desperate and determined candidate, according to a manpower contractor responsible for hiring some of the thousands of technicians who will help run the country's first-ever computer-related elections.

"For a cunning, desperate and sly politician, there are so many ways," said Alfonzo Revilla, project manager of Placewell Manpower, a recruitment company contracted by the Commission on Elections to supply information technology personnel for the May 10 elections.

Revilla's company is one of

10,000 A6

Int'l observers grade Comelec preparation: Needs improvement

By Nitz Calleja

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT.

That's the grade the Commission on Elections got for its efforts in preparing for the country's first fully automated polls.

Western election observers yesterday criticized the poll body for lack of a backup system and "insufficient" openness

INT'L A10

Mindanao hydropower plants nearing shutdown

By Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—THE SHUTdown of all the power generating plants in the Agus complex is now imminent with the water level at Lake Lanao dropping from the normal 701 meters to 686.5 meters, according to National Power Corp. (Napocor) officials.

Alex Abanzanza, the operations engineer on duty at Agus 4 power plant, told the Inquirer that the lake's new water level was recorded at 9:30 a.m. yesterday.

Abanzanza said that if the lake water continued to ebb, Napocor would be forced to shut down more generators to

MINDANAO A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SUNDAY, MARCH 2010

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONT PAGE

RUNNING FOR WOMEN AND SENATE Sen. Pia Cayetano (left, foreground) leads some 1,000 women, and men, supporters in a run for women empowerment yesterday on the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Pasay City. Cayetano is running for reelection under the Nacionalista Party.

Bishops: Beware of moneyed bets

By Kristine L. Alave

BE WARY OF MONEYED candidates.

This was the advice of Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales and several bishops in a pastoral letter to the Catholic faithful who are contemplating their choices for the May 10 elections.

Rosales, who issued the letter, said voters should screen candidates for national and local positions based on their competency and service-oriented agendas.

The best candidates, Rosales said, are true friends of the poor, who are "simple and humble."

"In choosing leaders, the electorate should carefully study and match the traits of a candidate with the needs of and the issues disabling the country today," Rosales said.

Perennial issues

"Two major and perennial issues haunting the country are poverty and government graft and corruption, with such destructive morality, that are corruption increases, poverty worsens," he said.

Just because some candidates are popular and flood the media with advertisements does not mean that they are capable of governing the country, he pointed out.

Rosales noted that "enormous campaign expenses in the past did not assure good and responsive governance."

Poll watchdogs have also voiced alarm over the spending habits of some candidates for national posts, saying that they may have already breached the legal limit.

blackberry smart

Pena's Pulsilio, a consultant of Separations that keeps tabs on campaign spending, pointed out that Nacionalista Party presidential candidate Sen. Manuel Villar and Liberal Party vice presidential candidate Sen. Mar Roxas started their campaigns in the media even before the official start of the campaign period.

Rosales also said that voters should see to it that the candidates they choose are God-fearing, moral, wellmeaning and respectful of life.

Candidates with real concern for the environment and the poor, and those who are good examples of responsible Filipino citizenship also deserve support, the source points out.

The Manila archbishop asked Filipinos to pray for successful and peaceful polls on May 10.

Peaceful election

"Needless to say, like the entire country, we should all pray for a peaceful election and a unified people before, during, and after the election," his statement said.

The pastoral letter will be read in all parishes and churches of the Archdiocese and Dioceses of the Ecclesiastical Province today, the fourth Sunday of Lent.

The pastoral letter was signed by other bishops belonging to the archdiocese of Manila, among them, Antipolo Bishop Gabriel Reyes, Cubao Bishop Honesto Ongtioco, Imus Bishop Luis Tagle, Caloocan Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez, Malolos Bishop Jose Oliveros, Military Ordinary Antonio Tobias, Parañaque Bishop Jesse Mercado, Pasig Bishop Francisco San Diego, San Pablo Bishop Leo Drona, Puerto Princesa Bishop Pedro Arigo, Taytay Bishop Edgardo Juanich, Military Ordinary Bishop Leopoldo Tumulak, Antipolo Auxiliary Bishop Francisco de Leon and Auxiliary Bishop of Manila Bernardino Cortes and Broderick Pabillo.

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Ministry of Education

CLOSING DATE: 7 May 2010

Fast pace forces Villar to miss sorties

CALAMBA CITY—THE FRENETIC campaign pace of the Nacionalista Party has forced its standard-bearer Manuel Villar to skip two scheduled campaign sorties this week.

After a much-publicized absence from a presidential forum in Davao City on Tuesday, Villar was also absent again here on Friday, disappointing his fellow supporters and admirers.

On both occasions, no explanation was issued by the party.

NP members told the Inquirer that Villar opted to skip the Calabarzon-Cathedrals sortie on Friday due to late meetings on Thursday followed by a campaign ad shoot in the Batasan compound in Manila the morning after.

Delinquents wanting to hear Villar and his running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, in Calamba and Lipa City were lying idle at the airport here practically the whole day Friday until Legarda cleared up past 4 p.m.

NP senatorial candidates Sonny Escudero, Gilbert Remulla, Rainier Mitra and Hector Lozo, son of detained Col. Ariel Querubin, showed up at the designated time of 7 a.m.

Legarda explained to reporters she was on her delayed arrival and Villar's absence.

"Because Villar wanted to be here," she said, but the ad shoot lasted until the wee hours of Friday. "It should have been finished by Friday morning, but due to the rain, it was delayed ... until late in the afternoon."

"He had to meet a lot of people, so he asked me to proceed here," Legarda said.

Villar and Legarda got to meet in Southern Luzon yesterday afternoon, a rendezvous that was again delayed because Villar's bulletproof car was reported to have broken down.

Villar's unpredictable schedule—which changes at the last minute—often leaves a night-mare for his regional political officers and organizers and the media pack covering his campaign.

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Another PMA '78 promotion, another need to defend it

By Alcuin Papa

SOUTH MEMBER OF PHILIPPINE Military Academy (PMA) "Maharangarap" Class 1978 yesterday took over another key post in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

In his speech accepting the leadership of the AFP's National Capital Region Command (NCRCom) on Saturday, Rear Admiral Odilon Angsor declared the class against suggestions the appointment of many of its members to top military posts was part of a conspiracy to keep President Macapagal-Arroyo in power should there be a failure of elections in May.

The class a close to the President and adopted her as an honorary classmate.

Angsor, formerly chief of the Philippine Naval Staff, said the suspicions leveled at his PMA class had "no basis." The military led by the class will follow the law and work for peaceful elections, he said.

"Of course, we say that once is a democracy so that those people who criticize the government have the right to do so ... Class '78 is another item for clear-cutting particularly under the politically-tinted lenses of those who are critical of the present dispensation," Angsor, a native of Cavite, said.

He said the administration's critics and opponents, "maybe assumption that good soldiers are automatons and law only to follow orders, impulsively cast aside the values of honor, devotion, professionalism, soldiering leadership patriotism that course military officers have, patriotically-motivated and honorably developed throughout their years of service to the country."

"We declare this once and even again: The public can be assured that the military, the defense establishment, will always be bound by the law," he said.

On Wednesday, Army chief Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit, also of PMA Class '78, assumed the military's top post....chief of staff. He had also taken the same palce to defend his appointment, assuring the public that he would not allow the military to be used for partisan politics.

Defending Premium Angsor, Bangit said he had never received any illegal orders from his superiors.

Bangit had also been former commander of the Presidential Security Group (PSG) and the Intelligence Service of the AFP (ISAFP) in the Arroyo administration.

On Friday, another member of Class '78, Maj. Gen. Reynaldo Mapagu was named commanding general of the Philippine Army, the largest of the major service commands of the AFP.

Angsor took over the post of NCRCom chief vacated by Mapagu.

The NCRCom is primarily a "coup-busting" unit formed to prevent the rise of power....Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

It is also called on to augment antiriot forces during large assignments demonstrations.

Other PMA Class 1978 members who hold key positions are Lt. Gen. Roland Jurdoli, commander of the Southern Luzon Command; Lt. Gen. Oscar Rebena, commanding general of the Philippine Air Force; Brig. Gen. Ramon Peruton, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; Marine Commodore Jilag Gen. Jacinto Ambrocio; and Police Director Roberto Rosales, chief of the Philippine National Police National Capital Region Police Office.

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'Private sector, Church can monitor crisis funds'

By TJ Burgonio

REACTING TO FEARS THE calamity funds for the Mindanao power crisis would be diverted for election use, Malacañang officials yesterday turned the private sector and the Church to monitor the fund disbursement intended to quell the crippling power outages and drought on the island.

The best guard against any fund misuse in Mindanao would be the private sector, including power industry leaders who are Pinoy pero pasado ng operation of "high-speed" generators, and Secretary Jesse Robredo, head of the Mindanao Development Authority.

"There are necessary control systems that can be done. We'd like to invite private sector participation," he said. "The private sector can monitor this. That will be one good mechanism."

State of calamity

"The Mindanaoans are not being used well never forgive anyone who would feel stressed with the calamity fund at a time of crisis like this," Robredo said in a phone interview.

Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Senate President Pro Tempore, said Ethnoid Villar Jr., top aide for the presidency, both raised concerns that the funds might end up in the pockets of the administration's favored local candidates.

President Arroyo last declared a state of calamity in Mindanao to deal with the crippling power outages caused by a month-long drought, allowing cities, towns and provinces on the island to tap five percent of their budgets to address the problem.

Malacañang did not provide a figure, but the funds are expected to run into the billions of pesos.

Campaign stunt

Secretary Ricardo Saludo, presidential spokesperson, shrugged off the presidential candidates' warnings of fund diversion as a "campaign stunt to land on newspapers' frontpages."

"Let us observe real preventive measures and if reality bites, beliefs agreed that the private sector, civil society and the Church could serve as a watchdog in the disbursement and use of the calamity funds to discourage misuse.

He also said the Development Investment Group (PIG) could play a role in the local governments in Mindanao. The group is composed of government agencies and non-government organizations.

"We have civil society and private sector observers," he said.

The PIG was created two years ago to look into the $329-million National Broadband Network deal with a Chinese firm. The deal was cancelled amid charges that some government officials had pocketed huge kickbacks from it.

At last Friday's high-level meeting with Cabinet officials in Malacañang, some members of the Mindanao Electric Power Alliance (MEPA) proposed to import 50 temporary "high-speed" generators to help stop the power shortages, according to Saludo.

"It was a good meeting. The private sector will package a quick project, while the government will provide support and financing guarantees," Pimentel said.

The proposals were expected to submit their project proposal to Executive Secretary Leandro Mendoza tomorrow, then it will be studied by the Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines, he said.

Duyon admitted that this was just a "stop-gap measure." The 300-Mw is minuscule compared to the 600 to 700-Mw deficit of the Mindanao grid in of last Friday.

Could lead to higher rates

"This is a quick fix intervention," Duyon said, adding: "Hopefully this will address into an actual project."

He conceded that it could lead to higher power rates in Mindanao. The Energy Regulatory Commission would approve the rates, he added.

"If the Mindanaoans feel that the rates are too high, they can oppose this in the ERC. The ERC is not a rubberstamp. It's a chance of having no or little power, and higher rates," he said.

Quoting experts, Duyon said that even if the rains come in July, it may not be sufficient to bring the water in hydroelectric power systems to normal levels, hence, the need for long-term solutions.

"It may take until December before the level at the Pulangui River in Bukidnon and Agus 1 in Lanao del Norte to normal. So Mindanao will still be short of power. Long-term solutions will have to be parameticus," he said.

A party-list environmental group, however, said the government should not blame the weather phenomenon El Niño for causing the power and water shortage.

Government to blame

In a statement yesterday, engineer Aniceto Orbeta of the Alliance of Concerned Teachers said the government is "scrambling to come up with limited and superficial solutions only now," Inilbo said.

Gemenne Bautista Jr., national coordinator of the environmental group Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE), said the Arroyo's government's "flawed energy and water policy was to sell the coal state of calamity."

Filipinos will now be paying for the mismanagement of the ruling administration which is now hurriedly acquiring emergency power assets that will entail higher electricity rates in Mindanao, added Jose Ike Ventura III, a candidate of Bayan Muna in the May 10 elections (With reports by Alcuin Papa and Herman Bersabe dela

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- Master of Arts in Psychology
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- Master of Arts in Education
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April 24, 2010
May 8, 2010
May 15, 2010
May 22, 2010
May 29, 2010
June 5, 2010

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De La Salle University, Taft, Manila
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February 6, 2010 & February 20, 2010
Ateneo Makati Campus
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February 27, 2010

Note: The venue for the test for the FEU Manila Campus will be at the Finance Building, Room 201

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law@feu.edu.ph

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New book rips veil off Supreme Court

"SHADOW OF DOUBT: PEERING into the Supreme Court," the first book of its kind to be written in the country, will be launched midweek.

Published by Newsbreak, the book contains by journalist Marites Dañguilan Vitug promises to open the tightly shut windows of the high court and give readers a glimpse of the least visible branch of government.

Shadow of Doubt will undertake the public to the internal dynamics of the court and give an idea of how the justices behave and think. The book would then provide answers to the raging controversy on the appointment of a new Chief Justice.

Asked why she wrote the book, Vitug said: "I was so intrigued by the secrecy that wraps the court, its culture of confidentiality. The Supreme Court is an important institution yet it's not really scrutinized." This is Vitug's fourth book.

Both hardbound and paperback editions of Shadow of Doubt will be available at Newsbreak and at select outlets. Inquiries can be made with advertising@mnbreak.com.ph or call Cecille Suatoni or Arnold Carreon at 9200000.

Check out www.newsbreak.com.ph for other details.

For 1st time, detainees will be allowed to vote

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE elections have been held in the country, detainees will be allowed to exercise their right of suffrage in the May polls.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec), saying that it was high time the disenfranchisement of detainees ended, will run a pilot program with the Commission on Human Rights in the court elections for the enfranchisement of 24,000 detainees.

Teddie Casiño, Anakpawis and other leading democracies in the country, the request to elect has no law specifically governing the exercise of detainees' prisoners' right to vote, which, according to our Constitution and say laws, is retained despite their incarceration," the Comelec en banc said in a Feb. 23 resolution.

Under the law, detainees, or those being held while undergoing trial but not yet convicted of any crime, retain their civil and political rights, including the right to vote.

In past elections, however, they could not exercise that right because the law does not provide for a mechanism that would enable them to vote where they are detained or allow them to leave the jail temporarily to vote.

"The disenfranchisement definitely may amount to the purpose of election as it will distort the voice of certain people who are not otherwise disqualified to vote," the Comelec en banc said in its resolution.

To do this, the Comelec had to enter a provision of the election law allowing the setting up of polling places inside a jail.

To adhere to the voters' constitution of the law would mean the disenfranchisement of thousands of voters, the Comelec said.

Atty. Gregorio Bautista, Commissioner Rene Sarmiento, who led the team to create a mechanism that would allow detainees to vote, special polling precincts will be set up in detention facilities to be manned by special board of election inspectors (SEI).

Besides this Comelec resolution, Precinct Count Optical Scan machines will be placed in populated jails, the exact number of which still has to be determined.

It said special BEI would be established in jails where there are at least 100 voters. They will take the persons specific ballots to the detainees and conduct the voting inside the jail compounds. They will transmit the results from the jails' precincts to the canvass at the end of voting.

In the case of jails with less than 100 inmates, detainees will have to be escorted by jail personnel to their polling precincts.

The poll body is authorizing personnel from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and Bureau of Corrections to escort the detainees to carry their firearms inside the polling places. Rebecca L. Alcuse

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Mindanao hydropower plants nearing shutdown

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2. Two (2) 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" colored I.D. pictures
3. One (1) Certificate of Good Moral Character endorsed with the school seal:
   a. UST graduates must secure the certificate from the Office for Student Affairs (OSA).
   b. Non-UST graduates must secure the certificate from the Guidance Office. Its equivalent, or Dean of the college they previously attended.
4. Pay the Application and Examination Fee of Php1,05.00; and
5. Duly accomplished application forms. (The forms will be issued by the Dean's Office only upon submission of ALL REQUIREMENTS.) The requirements must be submitted on or before one (1) week before the examination date.

Application starts on January 18, 2010, Monday to Friday, 9:00a.m. 1-4 pm
Examination Schedules: February 13 (March 27, April 23 and May 21, 2010)
Venue of Examination: Faculty of Civil Law Auditorium, Ground Floor, UST Main Building

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From page A1

power rate from damaging their turbines.

Lake Lanao is one of the two largest reservoirs of hydroelectric power in Mindanao.

On the phone with the Iligonon, Hapayon operations and planning manager Pedro Andres said the water levels of Lake Lanao and the Pulangi hydropower plant in Bukidnon had not risen despite the recent rains.

As a result, Andres said, Napocor had been forced to shut down 13 of the 20 generators in the Agus complex, and only two of the three generating plants at the Pulangi hydropower complex continued to run.

He said that one relatively power outages had been happening up to 12 hours in some areas.

"The grid demand is at 1,447 megawatts, while the generated supply is only 983 MW. There is a shortfall of 144 MW at the entire Mindanao," Andres said, adding that industrial activities in such cities as Davao and Cagayan de Oro were fueling the increasing demand.

Only in December

Jesus Dureza, President Macapagal-Arroyo's adviser on Mindanao, yesterday said the power situation on the island would get back to normal only in December—if rains come to Iligan.

Interviewed on Vice President Noli de Castro's radio program "Pera ko Iyo, Bayan," Dureza admitted that the power crisis in the region had gone from bad to worse.

"If it rains in June, the situation in Mindanao will normalize in December. We look "FOR DPR, and that's equivalent to four Iligans," he said.

Dureza said members in Mindanao were discussing a number of options, such as pushing up new plants.

However, he said, it would take four to five years before one could put up a new power plant.

Blame Napocor

South Cotabato Rep. Darlene Custodio said Napocor and the government should be blamed for the shortpower supply.

Speaking at the House energy committee's public hearing on the power crisis in Davao City on Thursday, Custodio said she was alarmed to hear that Napocor had suspended maintenance and rehabilitation.

"We had been warned about El Niño and yet it seemed to me that Napocor was not prepared. What I have heard is that Pulangi has not even been dredged, of all it is many years now," she said.

According to Custodio, the power deficit up in Mindanao has been aggravated by Napocor's inefficient management of hydropower sources and generators.

"I found that the power generation must need repair, but there has been no maintenance. And the Pulangi complex is supposed to operate on a 300-MW capacity but because of the absence of maintenance and rehabilitation, it has been operating only at 10-MW," she said.

But Napocor president Froilan Tangaro pinned the blame on the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (PSALM), whose responsibility, he said, was to ensure that power plants and facilities were operating at their best.

Lack of revenues for maintenance

Wanniel Bugaldo also represented PSALM at the public hearing, admitted that it had failed to maintain power plants and facilities.

Bugaldo said the revenues were insufficient to cover the expenses.

"The fund is from revenues, but [power] rates are not enough to recover the cost of operations," he said, adding that the government had been losing in the operations of the Agus and Pulangi plants.

But Vicente Lim, the president of the Mindanao Business Council and vice chair of the Mindanao Electric Power Alliance, said the appointment of Napocor and PSALM were sadly making excuses in order to fast-track the sale of the hydropower plants to private investors.

"I am worried because these seems to be a deliberate effort on the part of PSALM not to maximize the Agus and Pulangi complexes because they are planning to sell [the] facilities ... and clearly compromising the benefit and welfare of Mindanao," Lim said.

But Bugaldo said: "There is no such option. You cannot sell if you are providing junk."

He also admitted that the sale of power facilities was the government's decision with the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

Added opposition

In Cagayan de Oro, Northern Mindanao's Regional Development Council (RDC) joined the opposition to the planned sale of the Agus and Pulangi complexes.

NDC said the sale of the complex will result in an increase of at least P1 per kilowatt hour in the average rate of electricity to Mindanao, or an estimated total increase of P7 billion annually in the electricity bills of all power consumers there.

Compared to other areas, Mindanao enjoys the lowest power rate of about P3 per kilowatt hour.

Rudy Fuentes, president of the Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce, said selling the Agus plants—which currently provide 40.6 percent of Mindanao's total installed capacity—would enable the buyers to dominate the wholesale power market in Mindanao.

"Whoever buys the Agus plants will have an undue advantage, and this may lead to manipulation of electricity rates," Fuentes warned.

Development Bank of the Philippines president Roy David said Ms. Aurora had instructed officials of the DBP and Land Bank of the Philippines to provide funds for power companies covering power projects.

"We will make funding available for the purchase at least of generating units with capacity up to 100 MW," David said at the 2010 Outlook Business forum hosted by SGV & Co. at the Manila Polo Club in Makati on Thursday.

Warning on San Roque

In Dagupan City, Gov. Manuel "Nonoy" Baquing warned that the water level in San Roque Dam was now so low that "in roughly 20 days," it might no longer be able to release water.

That is a far cry from last last year, when the dam—which supplies 13,000 hectares in Pangasinan that produce 60 percent of the province's rice crop—released a deluge at the height of Typhoon "Pepeng."

Penaranda, the vice presidential candidate of the Liberal Party, raised the warning after inspecting San Roque Dam yesterday morning and warning that it could not run short of water for irrigation for the next three months.

He said that while the dam was nearing critical level, irrigation officials had developed a plan that would allow its waters to last until September farmers get done with their last harvest by May 15.

"In the next 20 days roughly, [the dam] will hit the critical portion. At the present rate, [it] will reach critical level before [the] 30th," Bonoy said.

"At that point, [it] will not be effective anymore. But current position water for power will last until May," he said.

Bonoy said that if the water recedes "beyond a certain point," it would "destroy the integrity of the construction of the dam."

"That is why if it goes below the current point, they cannot keep releasing water anymore. In the next 20 days, unless the rains come soon, we will stop. And [the dam will] stop producing," he said.

Half a meter daily

Celerino Sta. Ana, the National Irrigation Authority division manager in the area, said the NIA will "reduce the requirement for irrigation" on April 1, so that the water would last until May 15.

The dammay lies by the flooding in Bonoy, Pangasinan, as the only harvesting late because they planted late, Sta. Ana said.

Bonoy said San Roque Dam's water level was falling by "half a meter per day," as supervision of "28 million cubic meters."

"Right now, the dam is producing only about two-thirds of the electricity it's supposed to be providing. It should be 180 MW, but it has only about 60 MW today," he said.

Reports from Richel Umel, Jeffrey Tupas, AP, Dureza and Jody Queiroz, reporter/researcher Philip C. Tubeza in Dagupan City; Cynthia S. Balana in Manila

Cloud seeding useless—PAF

BAGUIO, Philippines—Lacking "ripe clouds," the Department of Agriculture and the Philippine Air Force have stopped cloud seeding operations in the province.

Col. Ferdie Bonito, chief of the PAF Tactical Operations Group 1 based in Clarkfield, said the team could not find clouds suitable for seeding because of the unpredictable weather.

Pinatubo said the team had made 24 sorties, flying about eight cumulonimbus (CB) clouds since February. But the operations failed to induce strong rains to augment water in Cagayan Valley.

DA regional director Andrew Villacorta said the decision to stop seeding operations was made by DA and PAF officials under the recommendation of the cooked personnel.

"Based on their experience, at this time the available clouds are not... Dito sumulpot is really very unpredictable," Villacorta said.

He said the DA had set aside P4 million to fund seeding operations in the region. His friends, the Emu running Magat River in Isabela, contributed P1.8 million for operations in the dam area.

He could not say how much had actually spent before the operations were stopped last week.

While the cold front brought light rains in coastal areas and some towns in Cagayan Valley on Friday, the volume of rainfall failed to reduce the water level of Magat Dam.

Sarmiento Rendon, the dam and reservoir division chief, said that while there were rains in the dam's watershed area in Lagawe, Ifugao, the water level in the reservoir continued to drop.

The water in the reservoir measured 212.74 meters above sea level on 10 a.m. Friday, below its maximum level of 193 meters. Reports from Philippine Veterans Jr., Hagadone Canberra and PE Esperita, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Highlights of the study

Question 1: Key issues

The 2010 election is really about change and democracy.

It's about "change, choice and choice," said **Tom Fredericks**, who sent his response via his Korean Air ID Service on the other hand, said the 2010 election is about "changes that could change our life."

Of the 840 responses, 239 (28.5 percent) cited elections, democracy, voters, politics and choices, as what the May elections are really about.

Respondents said the main issues in the next elections are: Having a new leader and changes (20.4 percent), reelection is removed (11.1 percent), corruption, morals and peace or traditional politicians (9.4 percent), poverty, economy and other issues (8.8 percent), President Macapagal-Arroyo (7.5 percent), governance and leadership (6.2 percent), voter's maturity (1.5 percent), intentions, visions and party platforms (1.2 percent), nationalism and youth (1.1 percent).

Others cited fear of the country, love, honor, integrity, peace, freedom, discipline and faith (4.5 percent).

Question 2: Positive traits

"Our next president needs to be capable of knowing right from wrong and, of course, of doing the right thing," said Nymphia Calmeo of Naga, Camarines Sur.

For Dominic Kay Ortega of Balanga, Bataan, the next president "needs to be capable of living and upholding good values despite having power power."

Mayor **Melchor Tapus** of Cavite said: "What you're supposed to have is honor, vision and conscience."

There's five percent of readers like Calmeo, Ortega and Tapus cited moral soundness or spiritual leadership as the top trait of the next president.

The next most-have traits of the next president are: Political will, competence and leadership (27 percent), selflessness and upholding the common good (24 percent), credibility (23 percent), bringing about changes and transformation (19 percent), loving the country (4 percent).

Other respondents cited the ability to address specific concerns like poverty (4 percent), unifying the country, ensuring the country's security and preserving the environment (5 percent).

Included in the category of responses coded as moral attributes and concepts were leadership and likeable, undiscredited, honorable, mature, placed model, leadership, principled with "love" and defenseless which garnered 21 percent, and God-fearing/God-loving, which totaled 7 percent, not corrupt/anti-corruption, which collected 7 percent.

Included in the category of credibility are responses which could mean leadership, honorable, integrity and transparency.

When these two categories are combined, a high 58 percent of the readers said the next president should be a moral, clean and credible leader.

Most of the readers, however, gave multiple answers signifying the next leader to be able to be clean and credible. Not only that, he must be able to express political will and to be an effective leader.

A reader from Cavite said the next president needs to be "incorruptible, with vision and good governance."

He should be capable of "demonstrating in supporting ideal of courage, integrity, hard work, selflessness and love of country," said **Rodolfo Neri Marasigan** of Iloilo del Sur.

A total of 37 percent said he should have political will, competence and leadership. He should be an agent of change, a reformative leader who can improve the economy. He must be able to uplift the environment, cultural ethnic of the nation, as well as regenerate morality and galvanize the people to action.

In short, he should be a "lack of all traits," according to reader Jeremy B. Felipe.

Question 3: Role model

The next president should follow in the footsteps of the late President Corazon Aquino.

Aquino topped the list with 307 responses or 24.8 percent, naming her as the favorite for president.

Aquino topped the tally before and after her death as the leader in regard that she upheld the whole nation into mourning.

Her husband, the late Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., had a total of 149 responses or 17.5 percent of respondents took up to him as a good leader.

A total of 69 respondents or 8.2 percent cited Jesus Christ and names say role model for the president.

Former President Ramos Magsaysay who was well loved by the masses during his time, got 57 responses or 6.7 percent, while the country's national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, was cited by 46 respondents or 5.4 percent.

Viviane Boncamao of Muntinlupa said the next president should be the Aquino, Magsaysay and "other Asian public officials who bear out of public office in the face of scandal or wrongdoing."

Other political figures in the top responses included Singapore's first prime minister Lee Kuan Yew (2.8 percent), Dr. President Ramos Ghana (2.7 percent), India's political icon Indira Gandhi (2.5 percent), Andres Bonifacio (2 percent) and former President Ferdinand Marcos (1.4 percent).

Presidential candidates also figured in the study: Sen. Manuel Villar (1.2 percent), Gilberto Teodoro Jr. (1.1 percent), Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (1 percent), Sen. Richard Gordon (1 percent), former President Joseph Estrada (0.8 percent) and Sen. Eddie Villanueva (0.2 percent).

Aside from political figures, respondents also mentioned biblical figures Jesus Christ (6.7 percent), King Solomon (0.5 percent), King David (0.2 percent), the Good Samaritan (0.1 percent), King Benjamin (0.1 percent) and Moses (0.1 percent).

Also mentioned were comic book hero, Superman (0.1 percent) and TV drama series characters, Darna (0.1 percent), a boy pilfered with the power of bowling, among others.

Question 4: Negative traits

Corruption topped the list of things the next president should not be capable of. Some 360 respondents or 40.6 percent cited corruption.

"The country's next president should not be capable of dipping one's hands into the country's coffers," said Manuel Lopez from Manila.

Readers asked to finish the sentence, "The next President should not be capable of ..." gave the following answers: Graft (183 percent), cheating (6.5 percent), self-interest (6.1 percent) and stealing (4 percent) as responses.

Others also cited the so-called United National Broadband Network And Media Alliance (UNBMA) (2.5 percent) as well as the Hello, Garci scandal (4.4 percent), two major controversies that rocked the Arroyo administration.

Common answers also included lying (5 percent), abuse (4.3 percent), greed (3.6 percent) and vanities in general (3.2 percent).

From Italy, too

Of the 840 responses sent in by the Inquirer readers, 37 percent were from Metro Manila, 29 percent from provinces outside Metro Manila, 12 percent from the Visayas and 14 percent from Mindanao.

Ten percent of the responses came from Italy, Macau, Maldives, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan, United Arab Emirates and the United States. Seven percent of them not to indicate their location.

The bulk of the responses or 99 percent was sent via SMS, 35 percent e-mailed their answers and 18 percent responded by fax.

Results of the study do not reflect the views of all the Inquirer readers as they included only the views of respondents who answered the questionnaire. Multiple responses were considered in the study.

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Turn page A2

There are assurances agencies that won the contract from Smartmatic-TIM, the technology provider for the polls, to close 50,000 techies just to help in the operation and maintenance of the 82,000 precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines to be used in the balloting.

With their crucial role in operations of the machines and their proximity precincts and polling precincts, these techies could become one of the avenues for cheating, according to one IT expert who had a hand in the licensing of the technicians from one of the accredited firms.

"One of the methods would be to ensure that ballots can't be counted due to machine misalignment," said the IT expert who asked not to be named.

"A technician could use a ball pen with leaking ink. A drop of this ink in the ballot is enough for the machine to misalign it, and the technician could always say it was accidental," he said.

Small, large-scale cheating

That would be the small-scale cheating, according to the expert.

For the really large-scale cheating, a technician would have to "pay the board of election inspectors to switch the ballots," said the technician who will assist all the precincts' ballots, which is very hard to do because of the presence of political party watchers, "he said.

The IT expert explained that botnets only allow 70 percent of registered voters usually go and vote.

"The remaining percentage could still be tampered. Even if you find the right people," he said.

But Sevilla said safeguards against the dangers of possible cheating have been addressed.

"The technicians are required to issue an affidavit that they are not related to any candidate up to the fourth degree," he said.

He said the computer make sure that the technical support personnel are not linked to political families or parties.

"They are required to be neutral," said Gene Gregorio, the Smartmatic-TIM spokesperson.

Sevilla said the requirements for a technician were that he be at least a second-year college student, computer literate and a cell phone owner. Ownership of a vehicle is an added requirement for someone applying to be supervisor.

The technicians are expected to be present on their respective stations at least six hours before the polls open, take charge of technician's list, validate all equipment and secure the MCT in the installation and the dismantling of the machines.

The technicians will also be required to make a solemn pledge of love for the country and Sevilla.

He explained that aside from the operational and maintenance of the machines, technicians are also tasked to answer questions and assist voters on correct procedures.

"I don't the technicians can only go assist a PCOS machine if asked by the voter. Otherwise, they are not allowed to talk or touch, write or press anything," Sevilla said.

Stand-by outside precinct

Smartmatic-TIM explained that the technicians will not be able to influence voters as they are allowed to enter the precinct only if the voting machine needs fixing.

"They cannot. They aren't to in the polling places, unless called for the BEI," said Gregorio.

He said that of the 46,000 technical personnel to be deployed nationwide to assist the BEIs on election day, 42,000 will be sent to the polling places to help fix malfunctioning PCOS machines and transmission devices.

About 4,000 are assigned to be PCOS supervisors, while another 4,000 will be sent to help in the counting center. The remaining 50,000 are established and will remain stalled by 700 agents to be based in Metro Manila.

Aside from helping Comelec personnel, the Smartmatic technicians will also receive custody of the PCOS machines at the end of the voting.

No protocols yet

The Comelec has yet to set the protocols on how the BEI can summon Smartmatic-technical personnel in case of machine malfunction.

However, the general instruction for BEIs stated that watchers from election groups and political parties are allowed to observe anything that is being done to the machines.

Sevilla said his company recruited at least 24,000 personnel to serve as PCOS technicians for the polling center.

The two other manpower firms tapped by Smartmatic-TIM are Manpower and Venturelink. Within reports from Edenier L. Mayo

Seeking peace through different faiths up at Manila meet

By Cynthia D. Balana

MORE THAN 100 participants from the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) will converge on Manila beginning tomorrow for a Special Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting (SNAMMM) on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace and Development.

The Philippines is hosting the event from March 15-18 at the Philippine International Convention Center.

Foreign Undersecretary for Special Concerns Rafael Seguis said the conference will present an excellent opportunity for the Philippines to highlight its own efforts in promoting an interfaith dialogue, particularly in Mindanao.

"One of the reasons we are hosting the SNAMMM is because we want to share our best practices, particularly the unique experience we have in the southern Philippines," said Seguis, who is also secretary general of the SNAMMM National Organizing Committee.

Seguis cited the Bishop-Ulama Conference, a dialogue between members of 22 Catholic bishops, 24 Muslim religious leaders (Ulama) and 18 Protestant bishops, who in the early 1990s came up with a program of action to address the root causes of the conflict in Mindanao.

"This is the kind of inter-religious dialogue we have affirmed their common commitment to the peace process.

Ambassador Ulises Conde A. Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, said the Philippine interfaith initiative was anchored on efforts to attain peace and development in Mindanao.

"This is a step forward really. An interfaith dialogue is an normal here that can propel a movement to achieve peace," Conde said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will give the keynote address on March 17 while Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, president of the 64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, will be the guest of honor and is expected to speak at the opening session. Other speakers include Dr. William F. Vendley, secretary general of the World Conference of Religions for Peace.

Seguis said a civil society town called the "International Workshop of Faith-Based Groups and Civil Society Actors" featuring partnerships with Government, an Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation' will take place on March 16.

6 Abu Sayyaf killed

ZAMBOANGA—SIX Abu Sayyaf members were killed and their training camp near Sumisip, Basilan, was seized after a week of fighting, a military official said Saturday.

Seven soldiers and 22 bandits were wounded.

"The Abu Sayyaf had several hostages in booby traps and (got) some of its followers to delay the troops from advancing," Brig. Gen. Eugenio Clemen said. Army troops, Marines and police took part in the fighting.

The military now says the camp was used as a training camp for bombmaking, the general said.

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'She came, she spoke, she left...'

From page A1

"She came. She spoke. And then she left... At night. Right, yes," one candidate complained.

* * *

There's a Midwinter of sorts in Erap's campaign.

As in Harry Potter sense, his supporters battle hopelessness have imposed a rule on expression and contentment that is the rough equivalent of how the antagonist is described in the book "He Who Must Not Be Named."

Not to be repeated aloud or caught on video or still camera are an uneven Lauren Ramayon, said to be Erap's favorite interviewee, and their child Janice, now a young woman.

But mothers and daughters made little effort to obscure their presence in the Maynilad gig of the campaign. Wearing Erap's bright orange campaign t-shirt, they simply glowed.

It did only to Tatiana Dy one Thursday night. Active up behind her father on stage and helped two campaign T-shirts to the crowd just before he took the microphone. Most of the time, Lauren was hardslope charming accompanied by with a fedude behind.

At one point Erap disappeared, and so did Lauren and Janice. Only father and daughter came back after about 30 minutes, and the show went on.

Christine V. Esguerra

* * *

In Negros, Governor Isa Lemuel Jonathan Lacson Fortuna thought twice before answering a question from the Inquirer on whether he believed that the presidential race was now a three-cornered fight between himself and the two survey leaders.

The latest surveys of the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia showed Estrada closing in on Sen. Benigno Aquino III. Richard Gordon's Bagumbayan Party and Sen. Manuel Villar (Nacionalista Party), and he himself had expressed confidence that he had enough time to win in May.

Erap said he did not want to apply to the question, somehow disappointing reporters who wrinkled a hot quote from the man who was ousted from the presidency in January 2001 and is now vying respectively in the nineties.

But he managed to show respect for his fellow dwellers. "I don't want to comment on that," he said, adding with a laugh: "Baka magalit po yung iba, a (The other candidates might get upset)."

* * *

Quezon City Vice Gov. Contee is one of the coordinators of the campaign network of Estrada, his running mate Jejomar Binay, and his senatorial candidates.

While Contee often plays a villain in his movies, his sense of humor surfaces despite the pressures of campaigning under the hot summer sun.

Once, Contee's group aboard a coaster stopped for breakfast at one of the gasoline stations during the North Luzon Expressway.

The driver parked the coaster but the engine remained where the group disembarked.

The vehicle made the driveway a lot smaller for other motorists, so a security guard approached the group and told the driver to move it to a parking slot further away.

Contee, standing a bit, initially protested and asked why the coaster had to be moved.

"The driveway is only for light vehicles," the watchman explained.

Contee retorted: "Okay lang. That's just a light bus." Norman Bordadora

Ladies' man

Administration standard-bearer Gilbert "Gibo" Teodoro is sure to bring penalty in the surveys, but he is apparently impressing the ladies with his looks and eloquence.

At a recent Makati Business Club forum that had the former defense secretary as guest speaker, MBC executive director Alfonso Lim observed the high turnout of women in the usually male-dominated meeting.

"I've never seen so many women in an MBC meeting before, and it's not even Ladies' Day," Lim said, drawing laughter from the audience of about 300.

After Teodoro got done answering tough questions from businessmen critical of the recent abduction of a number of well-heeled western kidnapped, almost every woman in the group was left with a blush.

* * *

On a road show in Mountain Province, Teodoro wowed in the crowd as he headed to a coastal village to shoot a simple lunch with fisherfolk.

As his convoy passed a group, a woman passenger clapped and chanted: "Ang gwapo pala niya (He's so handsome)!"

But some of the City Hall people were there, he and with earlier Mrs. Thomson, was not with him.

"Where's Kiko?" they answered to themselves. Jocelyn R. Uy

Tit for tat

The BIR's Villar asks in his ads: Sa totoo lang, sa tuwing maraming sa maghihirap bangka sa palengke Marot you ever that a short bench in the market? "Yes," says his closest rival, the UP's Aquino.

And Aquino says he did it for five days in the basement of Malacañang at the height of the coup attempt against his mother's administration in December 1989.

"I was supposed to sleep on (the Gloria Trademark) Macoy armed chair, but two of our household helpers beat me to it. So I had to settle for the bangko," Aquino said during at-10-dinner cocktails with co-partners at the Gateway Hotel in Sengkio City.

* * *

Aquino has countered Villar's cab stories with his own.

In Villar's close that he lost a sibling because his family could not afford to buy the necessary medication, Aquino said he lost his father from gunshot heard all over the world.

In Villar's story of being forced to sleep in the saddle of the street during Christmas, Aquino learned that he suffered a similar indignity when his mother and sisters were forced to strip down every time they visited his detained father.

What Aquino almost snatch it Villar's claim of having worn through a sea of pavilions.

That he said "I really doubt that. At Villar's age, I don't think the sun is hot enough were they. So I don't know what sort of garbage he swears is."

* * *

Aquino first made an unusual request in TV exposition dropping him on the campaign trail.

He asked that they kiss their of him or the rest of the campaign day when his yellow shirt early the ubiquitous ribbons and Philippine map is still mostly pressed.

Aquino wears a medium-size shirt, but with all the pushing and pulling from adoring fans, it's an XXL at the end of the day.

But at least it hides the pants that keep falling down his waist and prevents the public from taking a peek at his white Jockey briefs. Gaea Cabacungan Jr.

'Batasero'

Vice presidential candidate Bayan Pimentel has been asked several times what he intends to do under a Richard Gordon presidency.

Pimentel was standard-bearer of Gordon himself and Secretary of Education Jesli Lapus in the nineteen-nine because of the latter's experience in public works and background in mechanical engineering.

Pimentel likes the idea, but would like to take it one step higher. He wants to be Malacañang's official "batasero" or disciplinarian.

"Pipilitin ko si pare ang mga kasali magsasabuhin (I'll speak to the doctor)," he told reporters.

* * *

So, Pimentel does not mind that the new chair of the Metro Manila Development Authority passed all the past weaponeer grows.

"I feel elated. They have to go to the extent to raise the memory of me," the former MMDA chair said.

COMFY COZY Eddie Villanueva and running mate Porferio Tuang strategize Tuesday like it was their comfort zone. MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

Gilbert was quick to say that Metro Manila was going better behind the mayor to patrol the overpasses great as in added hours to Teodoro's candidacy (Green a Teodoro's campaign color).

"While I have no ill feelings, I haven't talked to him, to handle it and does not support the mayor because it does not really help..." Fernando said.

He also lamented the fact that people in government failed to appreciate the value of the color pink. "Yes, green stands for the environment, pink indicates to the pink of health." It's supposed to be more holistic."

* * *

A TV reporter noted that deceased clown Tito Aquino had been a vocal supporter of the late Sen. Jose of her brother, the UP standard-bearer.

On at least one occasion, Erap was credited for the good turnout of people who came to welcome Aquino.

"Why don't they vote for Kris? That's okay by me," Fernando said.

* * *

Fernando is 65 years old and has a Bronze Citizen's card issued by the Manila City government. Incided by his wife, Mayor Hizelle.

Does he use the card?

"Hig walang maliit (If there are no young women around)," he quipped. Cathy C. Rowcauan

Cacophony of silence

Bedridden Senator Rodolfo "Kog" Biazon Jr. and Leo Lapid drew the loudest applause at the Lakas-Kampi-CMD presidential rally in Antipolo City proving their mute appeal.

Just by waving a hand and smiling, they drew the crowd wild.

Biazon led the women supporters in a rousing chorus.

As usual, Lapid just stood there without saying a word. Said an observer: his fan created the frenzy for six years as chair of the "committee of silence," so why change?

Edu Manzano, their fellow senatorial team-mate, also well-applauded, until he found the crowd with a speech in English that made him sound like a corporate executive.

Perhaps he should take a leaf from Lapid and Biazon's book, the other observers. Ayla Zamora

* * *

Yet another review, Vicente Sotto III of the Nationalist People's Coalition, says thirteen tried to leave but he vows No. 53 is staying this night candidates for the Senate.

"I was worried that people would have a hard time scanning for my name on the ballot because it's under the bottom three," Sotto said.

Said Sotto, he said, a friend pointed out to him that the Senate Laws (ex Press Freedom Law), which was authored by his grandfather-in-law, was also known as Republic Act No. 53.

Now Sotto thinks losing No. 53 on the ballot is a good sign. Cathy C. Rowcauan

Int'l observers grade Comelec preparation: Needs improvement

From page A1

ns the country prepares to choose its next president with a new automated voting system.

"The good words of encouragement and to give some kind of reassuring [of] where things are. But [there] are still much improvement," Jamie Hand, one of five delegates of the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI), said in a press conference.

In a report presented to the media yesterday, the NDI said the Comelec would need a contingency plan in case of system breakdown which could likely delay, obstruct or lead to the failure of elections.

"The delegation believes the release of such a comprehensive plan, addressing both technical and legal planning, could go a considerable way to assuring voters that the Comelec is aware of, and sensitive to the many issues raised in the public domain," the NDI said in its report.

Aside from Hand, the other delegates were Thomas Healy, IRI deputy regional director for Asia and the Pacific; former member of the US Congress, Matt Dowd, former Justice ministers of Ireland, and Jim Wood, former president of the New Zealand National Party.

Backup needed

Since glitches were possible in any system, Hand said the poll body must ensure that the machines—to be used for the first time to count ballots, post-land to count results from more than 200,000 precincts—were found-proof and had adequate backups.

"The exceptions, whether less or not, is that the Comelec has our focus to. When it concerns elections, perceptions can be as important as reality," the IRI said.

This perception has "validated public confidence in the elections and generated concern about the automated elections system," it added.

Hand, who is also executive vice president of Arts Society, said: "We do not underestimating the enormous challenge that's facing the Comelec in organizing the Philippines' first fully automated elections.

The Comelec itself admitted that it has fallen behind in its preparation."

Not open enough

The report also said the Comelec had yet to provide to candidates and voters what backup plans they had, in the event the automated system fails.

Said NDI official Barry: "The biggest challenge and contribution that the Comelec can make is to communicate openly and frankly."

Gujilerson, former US congressman, said although they had not seen how the precinct count optical scanning (PCOS) machine would operate, they had gathered reports and reviews about previous machine tests.

Irish experience

Owen, a former justice ministry whose home country is beyond experienced a failure in automated elections, said the 2002 election in the Philippines would be an improvement over its past elections.

"I come from Ireland ..... We had an electronic automated system which we have used previously, recently because some of the safeguards which we came in some system did not exist in 2002," he said.

She stressed that the "key ingredients" to the new system was to print ballots with names and codes that "can only be read in the appropriate precinct."

Suggestions

The foreign observers said the Comelec had enough time to work on their suggestions.

"I think they can, it's a question of re-orienting some of what they already have in the pipeline and making the information they have available to the broader section of Philippine society," Knightmore said.

The NDI delegates were in the country from March 7 to 13. They met with government officials, leaders of political parties, civil society and human rights groups, and media representatives.

Fifty million voters are set to go to the polls in May 10, where 17,000 posts from president down to municipal council seats will be contested. With a report from AFP

'There's only one star in this show' at Cowboys Stadium

ARLINGTON, TEXAS—THE 1995 statement that is Manny Pacquiao grew with a series of wins against some of the biggest names around. Now he has a fight to win against a guy who has nothing to lose.

It wasn't supposed to be that way, but things rarely turn out as planned in boxing, because of fighting in one of the biggest boxing-free regions of the world. Pacquiao will have to settle for fighting in one of the biggest stadiums ever.

The opponent is Joshua Clottey, and he's what the wise guys in Las Vegas would call a live dog. A tall-ended brawler who has never been stopped and briefly held a piece of the welterweight title, he brings some credentials of his own into Saturday night's 147-pound fight at Cowboys Stadium.

45,000 fans expected to watch

But while he may be fighting on the star, there's only one star in this show. Little guys aren't supposed to fill big stadiums, yet some 45,000 fans are expected to be on hand to watch Pacquiao up close and personal—and on the huge overhead video screens that will show every drop of sweat and blood.

"The best fighter I've ever seen," said promoter Bob Arum, who includes Muhammad Ali in that group. "He one has ever punished with equal power from both hands like Manny."

Arum has a financial interest in seeing that, of course, but he's not free to losing who would argue that Pacquiao is a talent unlike any the sport has seen in recent years. He's coming off a stoppage of Miguel Cotto that cemented his credentials at 147 pounds, and he has created a buzz about boxing the sport desperately needed.

Twelve years ago he won his first title at 112 pounds. Now he's a champion in seven weight classes who will make at least $12 million in a pleasing new stadium. He owns the bright lights of Las Vegas.

And as importantly, Pacquiao's doing it without Mayweather, now a bitter rival after talks for their megafight collapsed over Mayweather's insistence on blood testing—and what Pacquiao referred to was the reference he bullied up on performance-enhancing drugs.

"Before fighters like me, we can be the greatest fighters without that muscle and trash talk," Pacquiao said. "He (Mayweather's) only a fighting action of trash and it is not a good example for everybody."

Pacquiao is a favorite in the scheduled 12-round fight which is expected to sell out a stadium seated down for boxing.

The odds are probably more lopsided than the talent differential between the two fighters, but it takes long odds to get anyone to bet against Pacquiao these days.

He was already a well-respected fighter when he began his current streak by stopping Oscar De La Hoya and forcing him into retirement. He followed that with a knockout of Ricky Hatton before stopping Miguel Cotto in November.

Last fight before election

Now he plans to add Clottey to his list of victims, and then take some time out to run for Congress in his country. Maywood has could sweet in September, assuming Pacquiao and Mayweather beats (Shane Mosley on May 1, but Pacquiao has also hinted it may be time to hang the gloves up after fighting as a pro for 15 years.

"This is my last fight before the election," he said. "I am not saying I'm going to retire. It is hard to say right now when I'm going to retire, but this is my last fight before the election and I'm very excited about that."

HAHAH! Pacquiao and his challenger Ghana's Joshua Clottey pose outside Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, after Friday's official weigh-in for their title fight. REUTERS

Clottey, a native of Ghana who lives in New York City, was picked as an opponent largely on the basis of his fight last June against Cotto. Most believe he won a split decision in that fight, but Cotto's only losses have been to world champions—Miguel Cotto in June 2009 by a close decision, disputed boxer Antonio Margarito in 2008 and Carlos Baldomir by a controversial disqualification in 1999.

Margarito, who was caught using illegal hand wraps under his gloves for a fight against Cotto, also attended the weigh-in, as did actor Robert Duvall, who joined the two on the main stage.

Clottey, who weighs a 2-inch height and 3-inch reach advantage, also dismissed knockout predictions by Pacquiao's chief trainer, Freddie Roach, saying that much bigger fists have failed to stop him.

"He only other time a Filipino said a decision disputed a world title was in 1965 at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City when Hall-of-Famer and boxing great Gabriel "Flash" Elorde won over challenger Love Allotey in 21th round disqualification in their junior lightweight bouts.

Two other Filipino prospects, bantamweight Eden Rennora and featherweight Michael Farenas, are seeing action in the undercard undercard of the pay-per-view fight card being staged by Top Rank headed by Bob Arum in partnership with Texas billionaire Jerry Jones, owner of the National Football League's Dallas Cowboys and the $1.3-billion stadium being touted almost as the eighth wonder of the world.

Sellout crowd

Jones said a sellout crowd of 45,000 is within sight on Friday announcing during the weigh-in that party passes tickets worth $35 each will be out for sale.

Gating to his superstar status Pacquiao will get a guaranteed purse of $12 million apart from his shares in pay-per-view and gate receipts. Clottey will receive his biggest paycheck ever of $1.5 million.

Arts Pineda, lead singer of international rock band Journey, will sing the Philippine national anthem.

Sessions will see action against Colombian Mauricio Pastrana and Fortune will battle American Joe Morales.

The main supporting bout will pit former champion and Pacquiao victim Gerzil Diaz against Mexican WBC lightweight titlist Humberto Soto.

Both fighters appeared relaxed at the weigh-in and when Clottey tried to engage Pacquiao in a stare-down, the Filipino boxer just laughed it off and laughed and then joked with members of Clottey's camp.

Post-fight party

Pacquiao has talked about his plans after the fight to relaxin, win or lose, he will host a bash and sing with a band.

"After the fight we will have a party," Pacquiao said.

Clottey's trainer Lenny DeArcos said his fighter should reach about 166 lb by the time he steps in the ring, giving him a possible 10-lb weight advantage over Pacquiao.

"I will be the stronger than any fight before," underdog Clottey said. "I am ready."

Promoters are expecting a sellout crowd for the first fight card in the new stadium, which opened last year. The stadium is the home of American football's Dallas Cowboys and has been modified to suit a boxing ring which is dwarfed by the size of the venue.

The fighters' images will be shown on a 72-foot-tall, 60-million-dollar high-definition jumbo television, making it possible for those in the uncabbed seats to see what is going on in the ring.

Greatest fighter of his era

Pacquiao has looked unstoppable in his last three fights and he isn't showing any signs of losing power as he fights bigger and stronger opponents.

His plan is to wear down the 32-year-old Clottey on Saturday so he can finish him off in the later rounds.

"He is the greatest fighter of his era," said Roach. "He has seven world championships. When people say who is the next Manny Pacquiao from the Philippines that is a lot of pressure you put on somebody.

"You might have a couple more champions from the Philippines but you are not going to get another guy that's going to win seven world titles in our lifetime. He is a once in a lifetime deal."

Pacman heavily favored; RP phenomenon fights guy . . .

From page A1

145 and three-quarter pounds, though this will be the heaviest he has weighed in since he started fighting at 106 lb 15 years ago.

In his 15 years as a professional, Pacquiao has recorded 50 wins (including 38 knockouts), three losses and two draws. More impressive is that he has swept his last 11 fights, mostly against some of boxing's biggest names, including De La Hoya, Hatton, Cotto and Mosley's best—Erik Morales, Juan Manuel Marquez and Miguel Barrera.

His last defeat was a decision at the hands of Morales in 2003.

Named Fighter of the Decade by both the Boxing Writers Association of America and the Philippine Sportswriters Association, Pacquiao also held world titles in the fly- weight (112 lb), featherweight (126), super featherweight (122), super bantamweight (118), lightweight (135) and light welterweight (140) divisions.

Clottey, a big welterweight who has fought at 154 lb more, is highly-motivated knowing that a win over Pacquiao will rank him among Ghana's greatest fighters—Hall of Famer Azumah Nelson and former world champions Ike Quartey, Joseph Agbeko, Daniel Ezra and Alfred Kotey.

'I'm ready to shock world'

"He bigger and stronger," said Clottey, who is experience both up to 160 lb in fight time. "I've never lost to a southpaw, I have my game plan and I'm ready to shock the world."

Named for his genuine skin, Clottey is a former International Boxing Federation welterweight titlist with a 35-3 record, including 21 knockouts.

Clottey, who enjoys a 2-inch height and 3-inch reach advantage, also dismissed knockout predictions by Pacquiao's chief trainer, Freddie Roach, saying that much bigger fists have failed to stop him.

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"You might have a couple more champions from the Philippines but you are not going to get another guy that's going to win seven world titles in our lifetime. He is a once in a lifetime deal."

The fight will start about 10:15 p.m. Dallas time (12:15 p.m. Sunday in Manila) and organizers expect a television audience in 80 million homes worldwide. With a report from AFP

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Preliminary victory

EDITORIAL

THE COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS WAS VINdicated when the Department of Justice recently pushed through with the filing of murder charges against the policemen involved in the Dec. 1, 2008 Pandacan shootout that horrified the nation. The charges, approved by the state prosecutors, also mean that the 15 policemen will be held without bail while their trial for the death of six civilians takes place.

The National Police Commission identified procedural lapses and the Internal Affairs Service of the PNP found some cops liable for grave misconduct and negligence. But it is fair to say that the case, overall, prospered because the CHR did its own investigation and closely identified the wrongdoing of the accused policemen such that no wiggle room was left for police authorities. The cause of professionalism and public interest owes a debt of gratitude to Lilian de Vera, who pursued the case against the cops for killing her husband and daughter during the encounter.

However, this is only a preliminary victory for justice, human rights and professionalism in the police. It has taken over a year for the case to get this far and it will take perhaps as long, if not much longer, for it to be resolved in court. Climate for the bereaved cannot to be a long-way off, all the while vigilance will have to be maintained.

This early on we can only hope that the lessons of the grisly incident sink in and really lead to reforms in the police. The Pandacan shootout was only the most horrifying of many shocking cases in which trigger-happy cops did the shooting first and asked questions later. Badly bags can't be the measure of effective law enforcement, and civilian casualties will always be unacceptable.

For these reasons the findings of the Napoleon are instructive: the cops in the Pandacan shootout failed to establish a necessity condon (i.e., blockades) in the vicinity of their operations, and furthermore did not provide an imbalance on stand by.

The DOJ, for its part, summoned the ground commander of the execution of the Highway Patrol Group because he was severely wounded early on in the encounter. The commander's being a casualty supposedly contributed to the confusion on the ground and the killing of civilians. This suggests that both discipline and command and control protocol weren't to the level it should have been during the operations—a flaw that many see our police force is prone to even now either because leaders are too gung-ho about charging in, guns blazing, with their men, or because the men aren't trained to take up the slack should their commander fall.

As lawbreakers—including criminal syndicates that may be armed/trained by former military or police officers or in cahoots with people in the active service—increasingly use high-powered firearms and shock and awe methods, the professionalization of the police and security services is even more urgently required.

It would be most prudent to assume that gangs and syndicates will stop at nothing to get their nefarious done, and that our law enforcers will increasingly be called upon to risk life and limb to do their duty. It is therefore as much in the interest of the law enforcement agencies as it is a matter of public safety and security to improve—and quickly—the command-and-control mechanisms and procedures on engaging seeming lawbreakers.

We can only hope that our lawmakers will pause from the hasty-hasty of the current campaign, to reflect on these lessons and put forward the necessary legislation to help our institutions improve themselves. The Commission on Human Rights, for sure, needs greater powers to compel testimony and gather evidence and thus serve not just as a moral, but also as a legal, deterrent to the abuse of human rights.

The DOJ itself can surely make it a goal to investigate and bring to court within six months the officials it charged in cha-cha-bols. And judicial reforms are a necessary counterpart to ensuring the swift yet impartial trial of cases in the courts of justice.

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A tribute to a fallen hero

SEPARATE OPINION

Ingguit A. Cruz

EVERY TIME THE POSTCOMELEC ASSESSment team contested Senator ERL candidate Aurora Pimentel over popular opposition candidate Emilio B. Aquino following by had won the popular vote, Javier petitioned against the decision, and forwarding his withdrawal on massive election frauds as canvassed by the Commission on Elections. Some time must to the Supreme Court for relief. Meanwhile, he was ambushed and killed by FEL followers, Javier and Aquino.

The case was thus a difficult one, and the following excerpts are from my journals.

The new Iriga-Sta Teresita Expressway is dedicated to the patriots on the ground in front as a result of improving events, it has become more and academic; it is not as simple as that. Several lives have been lost in connection with this road, not to mention that of the architect himself. The private respondent himself went into hiding. The party of will age has been defiled and the people will scorned through a combination of those in authority. This Court cannot keep silent in the face of these terrible facts. The motion is denied.

The abolition of the Barangay Pandanan and the disappearance of the office to dispute between the petitioner and the private respondent—both of whom have gone their separate ways—could be a convenient justification for dismissing the case. But there are larger issues that must be resolved now, once and for all, not only to dispel legal ambiguities here raised. The most important purpose is to manifest in the clearest terms possible that this Court will not disregard and in effect condone wrong on the simplistic and tolerant notion that the case has become moot and academic.

The Supreme Court is not only the highest arbiter of legal questions but also the conscience of the government. The citizen comes to us in quest of law but we must also give him justice. The two are not always the same. There are times when we cannot give him the latter because the man has been robbed and decision is no longer possible according to the law. But there are also times when the litigant has disappeared, as in this case, but nevertheless this court can to be involved. Justice demands that we see them not only but for the sustenance of the outraged right. Enough gone, but also for the guidance and as a restraint upon the future.

Due process is intended to ensure that reasonableness by requiring compliance with what Justice Frankfurter calls the rudiments of fair play. Fair play calls for equal justice. These cannot be equal justice where a rule already enunciated to the other party and with a judgment already made and waiting to be henceforth applied to her a court committed to the other party and such a judgment already made and waiting only to be formalized after the parties shall have undergone the charade of a formal hearing. Judicial (and also administrative) proceedings are not understood plays in which the parties are not expected to make the motions and reach the denouement according to a prepared script. There is no writer to foreordain the ending. The judge will reach his conclusions after all the evidence is in and all the arguments are filed, on the basis of the established facts and the pertinent law.

Since this case began in 1984, many significant developments have taken place, now the most important of which was the February revolution of "people power" that dislodged the Marcos regime and ended more than fifteen years of hatred by the entire nation. While the ambushed slept in his grave, the "missing" persons returned, suddenly reappeared, stood trial for the old forgotten murder while his accursed son enjoyed the protection of a foreign court. But Javier is now a free man, having been unanimously acquitted while his alleged victim enjoys the status of several small streets in Antipas, like that little elementary school in the old Bagulo that is also named to his memory.

But not yet.

Let us first say these meager words in tribute to a fallen hero who was struck down in the vigor of his youth because he dared to speak against tyranny. Where many kept a serenely silence for fear of retribution, and self-seekers feasted in feast of safety and even acclaim, he stood to fight. He was not afraid. History did not tempt him. Threats did not daunt him. Power did not awe him. And though he fought not to be hero-maker of war amid the sounds of shot and shell, he was a soldier nonetheless, valiantly fighting for the liberties of his people against the monsters of his race, and resolutely against the enemies of his own kin, who would impose upon his land a present and night of dark enslavement. We did not see the breaking of the dawn, and to our loss in a very real sense, Evelio B. Javier made that dawn draw nearer because he was, like Saul and Jonathan, "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions."

No 'ifs,' no 'buts'

MOMENTS

Fr. Jerry M. Orbos, SVD

DO YOU KNOW WHY THE GOVERNMENT recently granted discounts to senior citizens? Because someone pointed out that, when it comes to food purchases, senior citizens are prohibited from eating more kinds of food anyway; on transportation, they can't use it much anyway; on groceries, they can't stock much of those anyway; on movies, they have no eyesight anyway; and on hospitals, they don't have much time left anyway.

* * *

In contrast, in today's Gospel about the prodigal son (Lk. 15, 1-3; 11-32), the Father's love and forgiveness are without conditions and "ayoyas." The loving Father's generosity is gracious, total and unconditional. Many of us claim to give and forgive, but much of our giving and forgiving is often so conditional and self-serving.

* * *

Did you notice how all of a sudden, politicians seeking election positions have become so giving and overwhelming in terms of time, money and in kindness of promises? But then a only for a while, because once they are elected, they will be so busy in getting the return of their investment. They are going now in order that their will get more later.

* * *

God's love for us is beyond transaction al. God gives us more than we deserve, and He gets from us much less than He deserves. God is generous and merciful, while we are trembling yet counting. So to for us we strive to be generous, and go beyond justice toward mercy, are we become like God.

* * *

In the end, it is God's mercy that will survive. Our so-called merits will not be enough to measure up to salvation. That is why in humility, every day we earnestly and sincerely pray: "Lord, I am a sinner, have mercy (not pity on me."

* * *

Humanly speaking, forgive and love "if ..." But God loves us "even if ..." Our loving, giving and forgiving are very conditional. In our outlook, to receive as much unconditional love from God, may we too learn to become less transactional and more unconditional in our loving, giving and forgiving.

* * *

I am a grateful recipient of God's unconditional love. I know and believe that I was loved not as much because of, but in spite of me. How many times have I disobeyed God, yet He continues to manifest His constant love! Even repentance! I say it again. It is better to be presumptuous of God's love than to doubt God's love. If you have not experienced this it is like you are another Forgiven, or be broken and be made whole again. Then, you have not really experienced God's tremendous love.

* * *

He loved God who rose me. He loved Him more if we doubt that He loves us and forgives us again and again. God's love and forgiveness are greater and broader than we can imagine. Let us not limit God's love, instead, let us celebrate His goodness and love.

* * *

Remember me writing some Sundays ago about our trips this world and entrance into eternity? My very good friends Ismene Manuel and Nestor Pacienza had a sudden exit from this world, when they drove in Cebu City one, gained by fire at dawn last Thursday, March 11. It was such a shock to me. Indeed, we don't know the time nor the hour. The lessons of Lent reminds us again and again that we are dust and to dust we will return.

* * *

When tragedy strikes, there are many things we cannot explain or understand. In such moments, all we need to do is to accept, surrender, trust and hold on to God's master plan, and believe in His unconditional love. "Lord, I don't understand but I believe you have a plan."

* * *

I was in Rome (2) recently to celebrate the annual Memorial Mass for my classmate Fr. Antonio Bautista, SVD who died as a missionary in Paraguay in 1994. I do this in gratitude to his family who offered Father Tony for this mission with us (8 and 9). Truly, I relish the many countless and fruitful graces of people around us who live out their faith in very simple but concrete ways.

* * *

We will be in Manoloso City, Pangasinan for a thanking Mass at the St. Joseph Cathedral on **Wednesday, March 17, 2010.** To gather with the people and with Bishop Rodolfo Peralta, SVD, Bishop of Manoloso, we will pray for the healing of Pangasinan and our motherland especially for the coming May elections. And, we will also pray for rain, much needed rain to come upon us, soon.

* * *

Please remember our other unwritten but significant character in the Parable of the Prodigal Son—the faithful calf! Why, what did it do? What was its fault that it had to be slaughtered? It just happened to be there when the prodigal son came home. Oh well, if you experience being treated upon, or being blamed, or punished, console yourself with the thought it all happened more to an innocent faithful calf.

* * *

A moment with the Lord:

Lord, help me to love like you, with no "if" and no "buts." Amen

Brains and brawns

WITH DUE RESPECT

Artemio V. Panganiban

IT IS SAID THAT TWO THINGS ARE INDISPENSABLE in running a country: brains and brawns, right and might, legitimacy and power. Leaders must not only *win* brains; they must also *win* brawns. Understandably then, President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to be judged right and to have the might to enforce her perceived right.

All figured out? So, to secure legitimacy, she carefully chose all her appointees to the Supreme Court who, she hopes, would validate her stay some what may. In terms that sound power would take her beyond 2010, she even issued a kindly-sound edict of *stuff* the Manual Rosario of the Philippines—Lt. Gen. Delfin Bangit—who, as chief of her Presidential Security Group, exploded at least three military attempts to oust her.

In wishes her legal umbrella, her allies want her to appeal to Republic vs. Hallarin, where the justices A. Panes ruled on May 17, never mind if the Constitutions have her from doing so. Just her, the Palace dares. After all, the Constitution is what the Supreme Court says it is. There, after no incumbent justice is named to fill a new Supreme Court vacancy will open up, thereby giving the appointing power's to name another member of the COMELEC.

Verily, she now has the lethal combination: the Supreme Court to validate her wants and the AFP to enforce her will. Brains and brawns, right and might, legitimacy and power. She has it all by and our.

After 20 years in the halls, Ferdinand Marcos thought he had it all figured out too: a compliant Supreme Court; a pandering Batasang Pambansa; a captured Commission on Elections and a loyal AFP under Fabian Ver. So he confidently called for a snap election in 1986.

What he failed to figure out was people power ignited by a maddening secretary of national defense Juan Ponce Enrile, a popular rupture (Edsa) 3, Channel 4, the prayers of "rosary for Cory" (radio) time, and a rising tide of democracy (Cory figured). They proved that brains and brawns are not enough. The people's vote is an essential, if not more.

Prolonging has stay. In past columns, I criticized how GMA out prolong her stay. To repeat briefly, in a right presidential system, a failure of election in (not 10 percent of the nation will result in a failure of election; a new president becomes legally, when the unwanted ballots exceed the margin of the leading presidential candidate over the second place; no one would be proclaimed winner.

In short, it is really possible! Yes, very possible. The latest SWS survey shows almost a dead heat between Senator Noynoy Aquino and Manny Villar. And our media are replete with reports of bumbling, delays and glitches in the automated election preparations.

There is jurisprudence (like Sebastian vs. Comelec, April 30, 2009) saying that an incumbent shall remain in power until the new officials-to-be-elected and assumes office. Since presidents in fact but continued stay, her smart lawyers can justify it (SRA lockdown).

Even Philippine National Police Chief Jesse Robredo's contingency memo against shutdown is relied, according to him, to the Supreme Court's final verdict. Indeed, it is the Court that, in a crunch, can validate but may not the AFP that can enforce her sway.

Legislate of ballot delivery. To answer my earlier column, the Commission on Elections advised me not to worry about the secret delivery of the correct ballots to the correct precincts at the correct time. Wrote Comelec's Jaime Jimenez, "Ballot delivery parcels will be marked with bar codes. This will allow the Comelec to track the progress of each parcel as it gets shipped through various distribution nets final destination..."

Swift and good. But coders, if properly monitored with global position devices, can track packages. But the question is, are the courier companies that are yet to be appointed, equipped with this system? Equally important, the logistics of ballot delivery relies not merely in physical transport. It includes the following:

- Ballot printing. The names of all candidates be all conclusive in all towns must be printed correctly. Excluded candidates will deem the election because they cannot be voted for. Belatedly, Comelec has decided to limit the printing operations would not finish the needed 50 million ballots: thus it is process big yet more printers. But this still not solve the omission of the names of the candidates and other printing errors; an time left in double-check them.

- Packaging and handling. The ballots are being packed in black boxes. For better handling, the boxes should have been grouped and colored according to destination. Wrapping is important if moisture enters the packing, there would be problems in the handling of the ballots.

- Stacking and shaking. In the timermany warehouses, the boxes are being stacked too high, compressing the ones on the bottom and damaging the warmest packing. Too, the shaking and tumbling of the boxes in the delivery vehicles as they pass rough roads could unfairly ballot read ability. They could be unplatitous.

I can write on and on lovingly. My point is that logistics is not simple and can cause failed elections in several places because of non-delivery or delayed delivery of ballots. With less than two months to go, does Comelec have time to attend to these vital concerns?

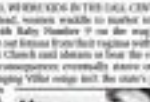
* * *

Comments are welcome at *ifo@pcij.org* and *basjr@hotmail.com*

This is a condom ad.

WELCOME TO 2030, WHERE SEX IS IN THE CELL CENTERS never fashionable dead, women waddle to market teeming Baby Number 8 with Baby Number 9 on the way and teenage girls drawer out fetuses from their vaginas with basic plastic hampers. The Church said abstain is fear the consequences. That the consequences eventually move on the streets of Manila singing Villar songs isn't the state's problem. Consequences.

I don't stand on politics to condemn candidates to damnation in a voting year, but the stance the Church certainly can.



METHOD TO MADNESS

Patricia Evangelista

With the Supreme Court bill in limbo as presidential candidates drop support in the face of campaigning fears, recently Secretary Edgardo Cabral banned all the rule of House of Representatives gave many condoms on Valentine's Day. His unrelated rants bearing for Cabral's resignation on the grounds of lewdness and immorality, the Church went back to its favorite stomping ground and demanded a condom condom advertising.

There is a reasonable justification for the ban. In 2007, when the Legislature made soft cut into the and easier for the last time, he took with him five decades of tobacco advertising dominance. The cigarette ad ban was a result of Congresses around the world going head to head with the big guns of the tobacco monopoly on the strength of a single damning piece of evidence: cigarette packs. The main cigarette advertising is to promote the delicious, addictive and in-kiddie harms of tobacco. It is a statement that although the state recognizes your freedom to kill yourself slowly by way of a Winston Lights soft pack, it will not quietly allow the murderers to encourage your children the false billboards. Unlike cigarette advertising, which is successful tombstone the concept to the great problem of death by lung cancer, condom advertising, if successful, prevents the sinners from a painful future with ill-be—a future sworn the Church fears.

It is an interesting argument in the land of free speech and free enterprise, neon signs and presidents with mistresses, BTS bars and MV. That most advertised products pose greater danger to the public than a condom does. Just take the billboards: public motorcycles and beer buckets and 24-hour deadened delivered to your doorstep. Let the grinning policemen prop senators; let liquor advertise the glory of gambling. All these are allowed because it is understood that individuals are free to make their own educated choices. Not every man is going drunk and beat up his wife, not every woman runs pell-mell into school buses. It is alone that is dangerous, not the user or alcohol. It is why the government requires seat belts and bans liquor sales past two in the morning. It is the same logic with sex, only the seatbelt is called a condom, nobody is forcing anyone to wear it on, and while the Church may wish it so, it is not a ban to call it a fable voted latex-dildo, the state is not permitted to do so.

According to a UNAIDS report, condoms have a 90 percent success rate against AIDS, and it's not because one in 10 condoms is faulty. The failure is mostly due to human error and a lack of consistency. In a recently-where 90.8% stood to disallow condoms, the majority of respondents were not using a finger and not on a penis, we don't need just condom ads, we need public service announcements from the national government ensuring that choices made are informed choices. If an individual chooses to abstain, chooses to have sex before marriage, chooses to be promiscuous, chooses not to have children, chooses to be married to one person, chooses to have threesomes at high noon with a jumbo pack of condoms and a hot pink basket, he/she has that right. It's called a democracy. Judge him/her by it, if you will, but the government cannot. A ban on sexual information is not to be included in the Constitution.

The Church is not the only Matrons. "I've never used a condom." It is also logical that he no longer has sex.

This isn't just about condom ads or that the existence of over-the-counter contraceptives like pills and injectables is kept quiet. It is about a government, with the exception of Cabral, that has buckled before the altar of Catholic righteousness in matters of reproductive health. This is the same Church whose Fr. Melvin Castro told supporter Jerry Canonizing that it is all right to vote for a crook for as long as that crook does not support modern family planning.

For the last eight years, the administration has lost over backwards for the Catholic Church, averring about the success of natural family planning and telling us to abstain. In spite how, 24 percent of women aged 15 to 49 who had 3.9 million unintended pregnancies occurred in 2008 mostly among the country's poorest 40 percent, 560,000 of those pregnancies resulted in induced abortion, 90,000 were hospitalized, 1,000 died from abortion-related complications and 1,000 women died in childbirth. 40,000 cases have risen over 300 percent. So when congressional candidate says he/she/she supports women's choice to use artificial contraceptives but not the RH bill, it is necessary to ask just how legislators women's choices are. It can't be a choice when a condom is an impossibility in a household earning only enough for a meal a day, when married rape is a revolutionary notion, and sex education is not to be had in any of the schools in the University of the Philippines calculus with all sincerity that he's practicing safe sex because we all know a girl can't get pregnant if she doesn't get an orgasm.

The state already admitted the need to curb both a growing population and the rise of STDs; it already put out a budget for both contraceptives and condoms. The problem is not the law, but the implementation. The problem is the Church and keep the public ignorant of choices that may well save their lives is not a policy decision, it is a moral argument from a single religion. The gods may damn the uneducated teenage girl to the slums for sleeping with her first boyfriend, but what government does it by consciously denying access and information to its citizens?

It is an odd notion to claim it is necessary to see a condom advertisement for a teenager in waist size. Dad and puberty take care of that. Keeping an entire generation in the dark because of their "delicate sensibilities" is insane preposterous for a condom ad when they will walk into multiple malls that include at least one store where Angelina Jolie pouts about the finish paint on a four-story billboard. You want people to abstain; you offer a foundation that demands it and convictions that stand up to it. You don't ask it from a government responsible for the protection of the varying sensibilities of 94 million people. If all it takes to "weaken the moral fiber" of a teenage girl is an ad that flashes condoms in every available in banana flavors, maybe it has time to do with the condoms and more to do with morals whose strength rests on a lollipop's wagging finger.

* * *

Her reproductive health counseling and support, visit the Likhaan Center for Women's Health at 101 Times Street, West Triangle, Quezon City or www.likhaan.org.

Reasonable views from reasonable people

DESPITE BEING BLIPPERED FROM ALL SIDES with optimism in favor of or vehemently against family planning, 80% of Filipinos are still quite level-headed and clear-eyed on the issue.

A recent Social Weather Stations survey, sponsored by the Forum for Family Planning and Development, an admittedly pro-family planning organization, found that 68 percent of respondents agreed that "all forms of family planning information and people might choose to use at a particular time should be available from the government health service." This means that the majority believe in the so-called "natural approach" to family planning (abstinence, rhythm, withdrawal) as well as artificial (they prefer regardless of whether these are "artificial" or "natural", and that they believe the government has the duty to make all these methods available, and to educate and counsel couples on them. These views endorsed by respondents in both Metro Manila and in the provinces, and regardless of socio-economic status.

The respondents were even willing to concede that national family planning, the only method acceptable to Catholic bishops, was "effective", with 52 percent saying NFP was "almost always effective" or "somewhat limited" in its use.

I would like to know, though, how many respondents admitted to relying on NFP alone to plan their families, and why this positive assessment of NFP is not reflected in statistics on usage, with fewer than one in five married couples now saying they use NFP (not to be confused with a traditional method like withdrawal).

* * *

INTERESTINGLY, even the findings on voter support for candidates who are in favor of the Reproductive Health bill, and those who are not, lacked the ability to make it through the regular screens.

The survey found that 38 percent or four out of every 10 voters would vote for candidates in favor of the bill. Only 6 percent said they would vote against them, while 22 percent said a candidate's stance for or against the bill would have no impact on their vote.

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

But the most interesting statistic is the 25 percent who said they do not know the contents of the RH bill, and perhaps that is the reason they had an opinion on the matter. If reproductive health advocates had done a better job on explaining the bill—or just explaining what reproductive health is all about—would the number of supporters have risen? Certainly, the opponents of the bill measure, including priests who made the injunction the subject of their homily Sunday for the past month, would not have received banners from their church walls or the "evils" of contraception and sex education, have done as much "educating" as they would. Clearly, the populace (representative of support for the bill are not yet equal to the Catholic church's influence) has shown no ignorance there on the issue, or else their credibility in this area has been so eroded by their relentless opposition.

And yet, why did the bill fail to make it through Congress? Because the bishops know who, in the end, rolled the sheets in this legislature. And that wasn't Speaker Prospero Nograles or Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, but President Macapagal-Arroyo who, in her relentless courtship of the bishops, bowed to their handwashing.

* * *

STILL, the GMA survey paints a reassuring picture of the Filipino public, telling us that, despite all the bickering pro- or anti- family planning, they are capable of making up their own minds on the issue.

Filipinos basically support freedom of choice and recognize the need for information to be considered in actualizing the choices that people make, that is, to make all legal methods available to everyone, when and where they need them.

Urban poor women complain that when they visit a health center, oftentimes the center personnel tell them to go back next month because their preferred method is unavailable. Or else, to simply buy their pills, injectables or patches from a private pharmacy, a not many cannot accommodate within their tight budgets. To go through a tubal ligation, a woman needs to spend around P20,000, and that is what nobody from Payatas is ready. True, being permanent, this method is the cheapest in the long run, but among the poor, who would have P2,000 put away anyway?

It does sculpt unnecessary, by the way, to mock politicians' earlier and cringier views on the issue, as well as their changes.

* * *

CONGRATULATIONS to colleague Simeon Tecson Rellin, columnist for the Philippine Star, who was recently honored by the Institute of Word Leaders. Chief Executive Officer at UP Los Baños, with a flower named after her. The Hibiscus rosa-sinensis "Dennis Rellin" was formally named over to Dean during rites last Thursday at the Executive Room at UP Diliman, hosted by UP president Dr. Emerlinda Roman.

The new cultivar was named on the birthday celebration of Dean's life partner, Chairman Bartolomé Bacit of the Southern Philippine Development Authority, who declared that the party was also a form of "thanksgiving," since he had just undergone a successful prostate cancer operation.

Friends and colleagues of both Bacani and Rellin filled the grounds of the Executive House, many admiring the hybrid gumamela named after Dean, with bright orange petals running pink and purple near the center. Dean Rellin said she was the "mother" of the cultivar, a hybrid "chinese" from the mothers, and the first among the planted "women in media and the arts" series. Indeed, a living tribute to a woman who has excelled not just in journalism but also in thoroughly unique and creative ways.

Dean Rellin herself, however, showed a gentleness of mute. Deanna said she was planning to name the grounds of her small farm with the bright-orange blooms, surely a sight to anticipate.

Cars, bombs and climate change

COPENHAGEN—FOR THE BETTER PART OF A decade, I have spent many climate activists in pointing out that there are far better ways to stop global warming than trying to persuade governments to force us to ride their bicycles or shaking their tobacco on farts that emit carbon dioxide. What especially bugs my critics is the idea that cutting carbon is a cure that is worse than the disease—or, to put it in economic terms, that it would cost far more than it would save. They usually say, "How can that possibly be true?" they ask. After all, are we talking about the end of the world. What could be worse—or more costly—than that?"

They have a point. If we actually have, as Al Gore recently put it, "an unimaginable calamity requiring large scale, governmental response to protect human civilization as we know it," then no price would be too high to pay to stop global warming in its tracks. But are the stakes really that high?

The answer from the recent cost-benefit analyses proposed by leading climate scientists—even those that go far beyond what the consensus climate models predict—are not as bad as Gore would have us believe. For example, a sea-level rise of five inches—more than eight times what the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change expects—and more than twice what is probably physically possible—would not delay all or even most of mankind.

Of course, such a rise would not be a trivial problem. It would affect about 400 million people. But the relevant question is not whether we simply want protection of the seas. But it would cost us to set mean the end of the world. Estimates show that the cost in terms of adaptation would be less than 1 percent of global GDP. In other words, the price of mitochondrial global warming may be high, but it is not infinite.

According to the latest global warming economics models, every ton of carbon dioxide that we put into the atmosphere now will do about $7 worth

WORLD VIEW

Bjorn Lomborg

of damage to the environment. What this means is that we should be prepared to pay an awful lot to stop global warming, but anything more than $7 a ton would be economically indefensible.

This idea is hard for a lot of people to accept. It seems to subscribe to a callous position that the global warming they see is "worth it." But we do it every day. Every time we choose to drive the speed limit everywhere in the kilometers per hour.

Obviously, we will not do this. The benefits of driving moderately fast rarely outweigh the costs. For a wide variety of social and economic reasons, we are willing to save only five kilometers per hour (which is not to say that we like it). On the other, even though everyone agrees that a successful terrorist attack is unacceptable, there is clearly a limit to how much we are willing to spend (and how much inconvenience we are willing to put up with) to stop terrorism cold.

Why are we willing to calculate cost and benefits when it comes to traffic safety and terrorism, but not when devising policies to deal with global warming? Perhaps it is because we experience the downsides of excessive traffic regulations or security measures every day, while the downsides of climate measures are largely in the future. Overall, a politician of mine, policy is more of an abstraction. It shouldn't be, for the risks posed by bad climate policy do serve just as much attention as the risks of worse than expected climate impacts—maybe more.

Is it that how bad the consequences may be supposed to be, the more reluctant we are to consider them? Is that the artificially inflated demand for ethanol—and for the corn it manufactures it—would go driving up food prices for the poorest roughly 50 million poor people into the ranks of the undernourished? Is it also to say that the land, which could be used to reduce the destruction of rain forests and generally created a situation that will result in more CO2 emissions over the next hundred years.

The bottom line is subtracts. It was panic and made the wrong choices in response to global warming, we run the risk of causing the world's most vulnerable people—those who will ever substantially experience the worst effects of warming—even worse off.

If we are to have a constructive dialogue about the issue, we must begin by recognizing that climate change is a problem to be solved, not a problem we need to replace our fixation on the limited, scrupulous scenarios with realism about the true cost of dealing with this challenge.

Project Syndicate

Bjorn Lomborg is director of the Copenhagen Consensus Center at Copenhagen Business School and the author of "Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming."

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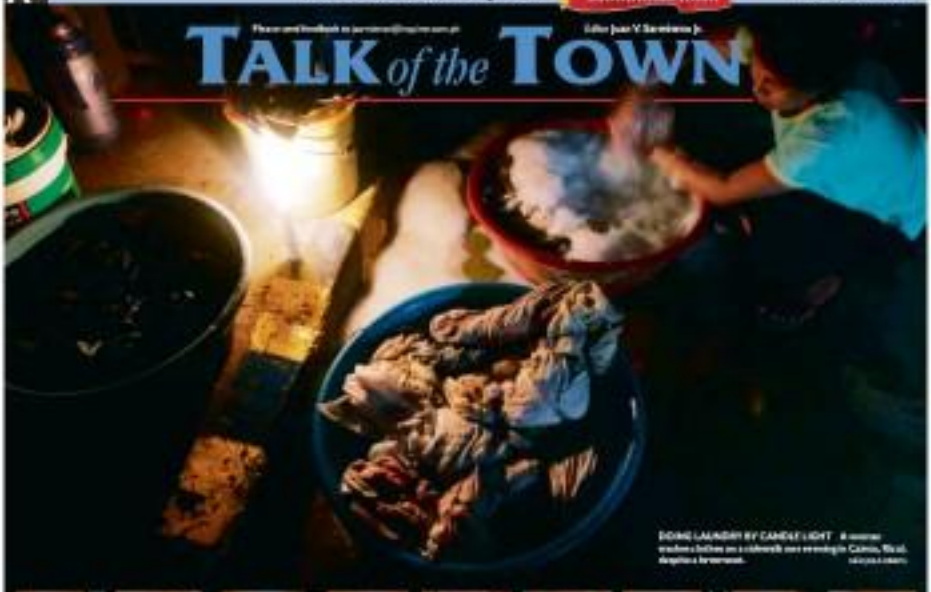
TALK of the TOWN



DOING LAUNDRY BY CANDLELIGHT A woman washes clothes on a sidewalk one evening in Cainta, Rizal, despite a brownout. VINCENT CARI

Benigno Aquino III | JC de los Reyes | Joseph Estrada | Richard Gordon | Maria Ana Consuelo Madrigal | Nicanor Perlas | Gilberto Teodoro Jr. | Eduardo Villanueva | Manuel Villar

Stand on nuke energy, power crisis

THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN HIT BY OUTAGES AS A RESULT OF LOW ENGINEERING CAPACITY OF Luzon electric cabcos due to the dry spell, and the breakdown and maintenance of power plants. Mindanao is particularly hard hit, calling up those willing to consume, losing 8 to 10 hours today.

The downfall in the country's power supply has brought into focus the need to come up with additional sources of electricity.

Two provinces—Bataan in and Cebu—have expressed interest in nuclear power.

Whatever the country and incoming nuclear power technology will depend on the policy of the new President.

Talk of the Town asked the following questions to the presidential candidates to get a sense of their position on nuclear power and the energy crisis that still.

- Are you in favor of nuclear power to address the power shortage? Why? Why not?
- If you're in favor, would you revive the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant?
- Isn't it too risky to pursue a nuclear program?
- How will safety concerns be addressed? (Earthquakes...not ripe and disposal of spent nuclear fuel)
- If you're not in favor of nuclear power, how will you address the shortfall as power supply improves?

Benigno Aquino III
Liberal Party

I would rather refrain on the issue of nuclear power because I'm not for nuclear power. We have other priorities why other sources of renewable energy.

Nuclear energy for investment is an uncertainty unless the new bill's present and that nuclear energy needs. Reserves to continue to have "moral responsibility" problems because of fears about the safety of its use. There are other sources of energy that have less threats of endangering the lives of people.

In the case of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, it has a large amount of documented safety hazards and may pose a threat to the safety and well-being of the residents around it.

The challenge for both government policymakers and private sector stakeholders lies in exploring and developing energy resources safely, sustainably and in an environmentally responsible manner. The pace of development must also be efficient and timely to meet forecasted demand.

Relative renewables are found here and our power can bring immediate "energy self-sufficiency," the main purpose of optimal mix of sources of energy to meet demand and aggressively. If we hope to avoid our family's needs. The energy mix should be 40% to reduce this investment, with be supply, price relatively and preferences now.

The government must also take measures side in pushing for a more performance competition policy.

Submitted by Aquino's staff

JC de los Reyes
Ang Kapatiran

Under present level of technology and the issues of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, though I, a. Without technology, it is a definite NO. I am not in favor of reviving the BNPP.

We should explore other power resources of the infrastructure such as conserving it to natural gas or biomass, etc system. Careful consideration, however, must be made should balanced technology be preferred as this may provide the cheapest and safest source of fuel energy that we can apply for our own sustainable development.

The shortfall in power supply, especially in the Visayas and Mindanao, must be addressed with a combination of short-term measures and medium- and long-term measures. Short-term measures should not prejudice the development of clean, renewable and renewable energy resources.

Power pull-outs have unfortunately caused jobs for previous administration with power plant investment continuously be conveyed and, in some cases, weaponized others found malpractices and irregularities to consumers who ultimately pay for the mistakes made by government.

Overcoming the strong utility providers in generation, transmission and distribution sectors to be allowed by educating the power sector of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA).

Government policy is subject on it upon the industry to monopoly and unwillingness of the determinants of consumers.

But first and among the aggregation, entered under the figure, must now be allowed to operate as contemplated in the law to encourage competition and protect consumers when abuse of market power is found.

The state must compel them by using stipulations in an effective combined in the form or by using public resources in support of public interests. Agreements will be made, in the power prices charges, which is beneficial to the general public.

Interview by Aytana Aning

Joseph Estrada
Partido ng Masang Pilipino

Countries like Taiwan rely on the nuclear power for electricity. Why can't we do that? I have been of using the nuclear power plant but we have to resolve the safety issues first before I become a believer. I favor the use of hydro, tidal and wind energy.

We paid five billion pesos when I was still incumbent that it was fully paid. Ironically, since it is now a fossil fuel, why not refinance it?

The government should have anticipated the power crisis with the growth of our population. Otherwise, we would have shortage in energy. There were projects that power problem before but our experience only resulted in more graft and corruption. There should be no more projects or power plant greenhouse.

I'm in favor of alternate sources of energy such as geothermal energy, especially those of northern that would help solve our power crisis.

Interview by Norman Bordadora

Richard Gordon
Bagumbayan

I am in favor of using nuclear power if it is safe. In the long run, much cheaper.

The only problem with nuclear power is how to store it. But it is clean in the long run.

Besides, there are nuclear plants all around us. Taiwan has a nuclear plant. Japan has a nuclear plant.

What is the objection to? It seems that we can't do anything right. It's damned if you do and damned if you don't or imbalance. You don't understand.

Every country we keep putting fear and doubt in our capabilities. It is repeated that we lived in earthquake zones. But in some like in the Philippines, in earthquake zones, are safe, are safer.

The other countries want our nation outclassed from us. They want to use plants by airplanes. I don't see why we are afraid of the earthquake power.

Stop fear by the public about the revival of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. I will have to study the pros and the cons. It seems like a shame that we paid for it and we never got a single volt of power from them.

I'll be people of the use will tap power if, I don't have to afraid of it. But if the people will be against it because they have said tell the same carefully, then due to also OK.

Interview by Aldwin C. Bonita Jr.

Maria Ana Consuelo Madrigal
Independent

I am not in favor of nuclear energy projects by GMA, but yes to energy resolutions to remedy the power crisis.

Electricity providers and nuclear energy will only solve the problem because of the dying days of the present administration and the economy.

Rather than energy is not only us, projects but also dangerous to the health and well-being of the citizens.

Building a nuclear power plant is just something that can easily be done. Also, time-wise, it is not easily done.

Private sector of this province to remedy the power crisis is an energy resolutions as proposed by Greenpeace and other environmental groups.

Greenpeace targets that are more economic than dependence on fossil fuels and reduce carbon emissions.

We need to establish as well as use of biomass, similar to be energy-consuming appliances, etc. before and of coal and light.

Finally, we need to remove the monopolies in the power system.

Interview by Jerry Esplanada

Nicanor Perlas
Independent

Why should we lock ourselves in to a confusingly evident expensive and problematic?

The Bataan Nuclear Power Plant cannot be repaired to provide safe and reliable energy. To reveal the government to spend $2 billion to $3 billion. A nuclear plant makes it so 30 years to build. A 1,000 megawatt plant is all cost around $3 billion. A nightmare scenario is a coolant accident, and we're uranium poor.

We can rely on geothermal power to address the shortfall in power supply. It's faster to construct and we have the technology and experience. We'll push "mega-watt" in efficient technology to reduce energy consumption by 30 percent. A smart grid can empower families to become producers of wind or solar energy.

Interview by RJ Dap

Gilberto Teodoro Jr.
Lakas-Kampi-CMD

I am in favor of studying the possibility of applying nuclear power. It depends on available locations and what technologies do these locations. I think we should explore that possibility. Many countries are doing it, like the United Arab Emirates, which is an oil-exporting country. I don't see why we should not do it in the Philippines.

And no to the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP). It needs rehabilitation of that. Other plants, pursuit, rigor is [possible]. The claim is there are a lot of technical faults. The BNPP is of a kind of old-generation technology. That's the reason why we have to abandon it.

To address the shortfall in power supply, we need alternative and transmissible sources of energy. If your investment is cheaper but that's for the long run. In the short run, probably the solar panel thing is to think of is to allow [us] time to import power-producing equipment for this and to take away whatever penalties for self-generation that is now caused in the future.

Interview by RJ Esperanza

Eduardo Villanueva
Bangon Pilipinas

I favor a world perspective power mix guaranteed safety first. I am open to explore nuclear power but, in Korea and Japan where power rates are low. They have nuclear plants. What's important is to have a credible professional board of control operation. The more time endeavor efforts to eliminate sources.

At the right time and the right location where there's no earthquake zone, plus guaranteed safety now, I can open to be utilize natural/marine power because of our super-high power rates.

But I'm against reopening the BNPP because of the safety and disposal issues that will be raised by the experts and stakeholders, so we can look at safety concerns and to make sure that we have nothing will work for our benefit and not harm us in any way.

Submitted by Villar's staff

INQUIRER Mindanao

John Jan Bandayel
Correspondent Mina R. Alcantara

Gov't gropes for power crisis solution

By Ryan Rosauro
Iligan City

MINDANAO FACES THE PROSPECT OF LONGER periods of darkness, and an automated electoral exercise without electricity, two months after regional boardroom started, unless emergency power supplies are made on-stream immediately.

The deficiency reached a new high of 700 megawatts on March 9 when peak load demand also climbed to a record 1,472 MW with only 772 MW available from existing generating plants.

Already, this situation is showing how the Department of Energy (DOE) has so far failed to respond to the power needs of the island.

The hydro-driven generation capacity makes Mindanao vulnerable to a prolonged dry spell that lowers water inflow, which, in turn, runs the turbines of hydroelectric plants. Its dire and full accounts for a significant part in the rise and fall of available capacity.

The situation on March 2 afternoon, March 8 afternoon, and Feb. 26 showed that the shortfall in hydroelectric could have been supplanted by non-hydro capacities. The rise in the March 2 capacity was due to the availability of 25 MW from the IDPP.

Receding water levels

In an advisory on March 6, the NGCP said the expected downward in available capacity for the current week was due to planned outages at several plants.

Currently owned by Napocor, the island's main hydroelectric sources are six plants along the Agus River that cascades from Lanao del Sur toward Iligan City. This complex has a total capacity of 727 MW.

A similar facility is found in Sharmay town in Bukidnon, which taps water from the Pulangi River. It has a total capacity of 255.5 MW.

In all, the Agus and Pulangi plants have a combined capacity of 982 MW, but their productions is undermined by the receding water levels due to the dry spell. The Agus plants depend on water from Lake Lanao which, in turn, is fed by rivers emanating from the Lanao del Sur and Bukidnon watersheds.

The Pulangi River is fed by the watersheds of Bukidnon and Agusan.

Water level in Lake Lanao has already breached the critical point of 699.13 meters to went the end of February. When it reaches 698.10 meters, Napocor will have to shut down the hydropower plants to prevent serious damage even as some plant engineers are already reporting the entry of silt into the turbines.

As of the afternoon of March 8, the water level is at 699.03 meters, meaning a total decline of only five centimeters in eight days. At this rate, it will take over three months before a formal shutdown takes place, probably toward June, the onset of the rainy season.

But within such period, the hydroelectric plants will be running at very minimal capacities.

Existing capacities

Mindanao has 19 existing power plants with total installed capacity of 1,993.9 MW. Of this, total dependable capacity is at 1,872.1 MW comprising of diesel-fuel, 683.4 MW; geothermal, 103.5 MW; hydro, 876.4 MW; coal, 1,140 MW; and coal-thermal, 200 MW.

Eleven of the 19 plants are embedded generators for distribution utilities. These have a combined rated capacity of 150.6 MW, or a total dependable capacity of 121.6 MW. That leaves eight plants providing for the entire Mindanao grid, or total dependable capacity of 1,349.7 MW.

A 2006 Update Supplement of the Power Development Plan (PDP) of the DOE estimates energy consumption in Mindanao to increase at 6.3 percent to 6.7 percent yearly. Expected peak demand was determined at 1,295-1,319 MW for 2008, 1,363-1,408 MW for 2007, 1,448-1,503 MW for 2008, 1,525-1,612 MW for 2009, and 1,620-1,730 MW for 2010.

But actual power demand was a bit lower. The DOE said this was because of a protracted slowdown between 2005 and 2008 as fallout of the global recession. In 2006, peak demand was only 1,229 MW, 1,241 MW in 2007, and 1,204 MW in 2008.

The PDP noted that by the end of 2006, the aggregate dependable capacity, including the embedded generating units of private distribution utilities is estimated at 1,492 MW. With current dependable capacity of 1,672.1 MW, this means that 180.1 MW of dependable generating capacity was added in Mindanao in the last three years.

The PDP projected that within 15 years from end of 2006, the required capacity will increase to 2,316 MW. To prepare for this, it outlined some 650 MW in capacity additions, consisting of at least 180 MW plants to be available yearly from 2009 to 2014. All these were estimated to require some 999.5 billion.

Amid setbacks in the timing of these projects, the PDP's 2006 Update expected the 250 MW coal-fired plant to help "stabilize the power supply in Mindanao for the next two years," or for 2007 to 2008. This is why no capacity additions were recommended for 2007 and 2008.

The peak load demand on March 9 at 1,472 MW is within range of the PDP's peak demand projection for 2006 of 1,440-1,503 MW. This means that Mindanao's current power demand is one years behind the foreseen situation. Hence, it is comfortably within the planned and existing level of generation capacities.

"This is the good news in the current power crisis. What we sorely lack is the immediacy on the part of authorities to institute temporary solutions for this temporary problem," said Bayan Muna party-list Representative Teodoro Casiño (BMC), which has been campaigning for reforms in the power industry.

The PDP and the corresponding investments in generation capacity over the last three years did not help the DOE adequately responded to foreseen strategic power needs of Mindanao for this time, the department failed to prepare measures to lessen the impact of a predicted long dry spell on the power supply of hydroelectric-dependent Mindanao.

Table 1: Mindanao Power Generation Deficiency

Dates	Available Peak/load Capacity (in MW)	Peak/load Demand (in MW)	Generation Deficiency (in MW)	Increase/ (Decrease) in Deficiency (in MW)
3/1/11	1,288	1,150	-138	
3/2/11	881	1,100	-319	202
3/3/11	800	1,059	-259	51
3/4/11	894	1,219	-325	276
3/5/11	894	1,219	-325	276
3/6/11	906	1,253	-347	251
March 7 AM	822	1,316	-494	518
March 7 PM	822	1,400	-578	*84 from March 6 AM *180 from March 7
March 8 AM	808	1,318	-510	*484 from March 7 PM *26 from March 8 AM
March 8 PM	808	1,220	-406	*172 from March 8 AM *30 from March 8 PM *34 from March 9 AM
March 9 AM	772	1,281	-509	*142 from March 8 PM *140 from March 9 AM
March 9 PM	772	1,472	-700	*191 from March 9 AM
March 10 AM	772	1,468	-696	*4 from March 9 PM
March 10 PM	772	1,400	-628	*68 from March 10 AM
March 11 AM	772	1,401	-629	*1 from March 10 PM

Already, this situation is showing how the Department of Energy (DOE) has so far failed to respond to the power needs of the island.

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Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Execs say no calamity in Batangas

BATANGAS CITY—Agriculturists and local officials, who conducted studies on the effects of the El Niño phenomenon on their towns, said a state of calamity should not yet be declared in Batangas because damage to agriculture was not massive and the supply of rice was sufficient.

Ibaan town Mayor Reinaldo Hernandez, who owns a 29.3-hectare land planted with corn and being managed by corporations under Ibaan farmers, said while farms in the town were suffering from the dry spell, it wasn't the proper time to declare the entire Batangas or his town in a state of calamity.

Poor veggies

Ibaan agriculturist Lydia Perez said the El Niño had delayed the growth of vegetables, mostly string beans, bitter gourd and eggplants. Even vegetables planted in backyards were hurt.

Perez said the town does not have shallow tube wells (STWs) and that what its farmers need are seedlings.

She also said even if the wells were available, these will not be used since because bodies in the ground would have to be drilled to find reservoirs of water.

"It's expensive," she said.

Perez said existing conditions in the province are not enough to declare a state of calamity in Ibaan or the province.

Worse drought

She recalled that in 1998 the soil cracked were huge due to dry spell but no state of calamity was declared in the province.

Ibaan's land area is about 6,796 ha, 5,161 ha of which are agricultural—mlih rice, sugarcane and corn as basic crops.

Eighty-five percent of Ibaan's land is flood prone.

In Calaca town, which has 11,000 ha of land—9,000 ha of which are agricultural, Mayor Socorro Sta. Ana said this was not the proper time to declare a state of calamity in Batangas.

Sta. Ana said town officials were preparing for food shortage should the El Niño and La Niña phenomena reduce the supply of rice.

Alicia Cabrera, Calaca agriculturist, said what the town needs is water and shallow tube wells would not help because the water is nearly spilled.

Cabrera said almost 90 percent of the town's vegetable gardens have been hurt by the dry spell.

Food shortage

Planning is also the main source of livelihood in the town but, she said, "it is not yet the proper time to declare the town under state of calamity."

She said what the town was preparing for was a possible shortage of food after El Niño.

Alethea Tamayo, National Food Authority provincial manager, assured the province of enough rice supply. Existing stocks, he said, would last for two more months and more rice are coming from Vietnam and Thailand.

Romeo Inocencio, agricultural center, Virgilio Mercado said the possible basis for declaring a state of calamity were not yet present. There are 80 percent of crops have been destroyed, huge losses in poultry, dried bancks, huge cracks on the soil and useless irrigation systems.

Marvah Dela Cruz, Inquirer Southern Luzon

FREE TRADE

Two eateries with similar-sounding names attract customers in Ibo, Zambales, with their play on words. People in the place say it's a healthy competition between the Cooking ng Ina Mo carinderia at left and the Cooking ng Ina Mo Rin at right.

SC justice's son bewails attacks on dad

ILOILO, MARINDUQUE—Supporters of a congressional candidate and son of Supreme Court Justice Prudencio J. Velasco Jr. have called his critics "enemies not to drag the name of his father into the political race in the province.

Lord Allan Velasco, who is running for Congress in Marinduque, insisted what he said was "plenty true" in media allegedly backed by his political opponents who are assailing the honor and integrity of his father.

Terry Lara, a community leader in Torrijos, Marinduque, asked the opponents of Velasco not to drag the name of his father in the political intrigues. "Justice Velasco rarely comes here—and only to visit relatives," he said.

Supporters of Velasco—many in gear (jerseys, fatinesses, pouch and bandage) worn down—have earlier protested upon the young Velasco, a lawyer and former provincial administrator, to run for Congress to uplift the economic status of Marinduque—but, they said, has been neglected for many years.

"They (core leadership) had a hard time pulling our Marinduque boss engine in essential services, particularly medical and infrastructure needs of the residents.

"We call on those who feel threatened by the popularity of Atty. Lord Velasco to leave his father out of the political contests. Their black propaganda is only showing the obvious—they cannot find anything derogatory to hit the young Velasco with," the supporters said.

Velasco is vying for a seat in Congress against Edmundo Reyes Jr., who in 2007 withdrew from the gubernatorial race in Marinduque.

Reyes and his mother, Carmencita, have exchanged election posts for the past three terms—governor vs. member of Congress.

Velasco started gaining support from thousands of residents during his two-year stint as provincial administrator.

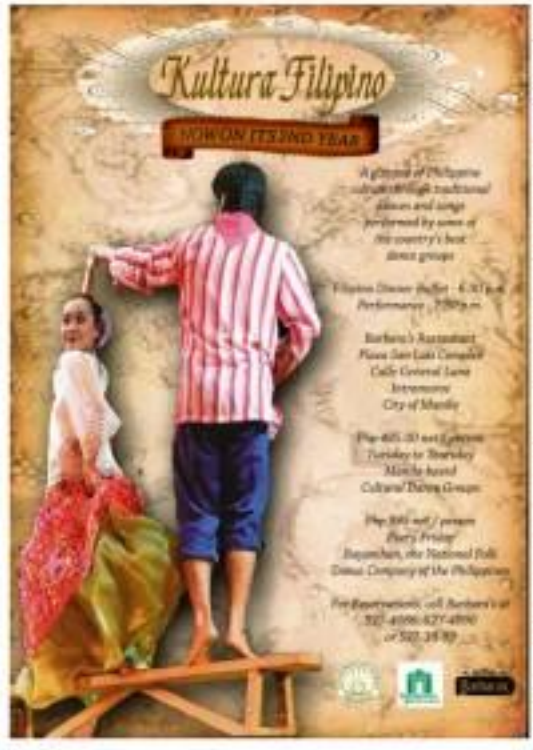
His opponents, however, started to attack his family before the start of his sensitive position in the judiciary.

"We call on the political opponents of Attorney Velasco to play fair," said a statement from the Velasco camp.

"They should stick on him and not Justice Velasco who does not lack enemies composed mostly of litigants who lost cases in a fair and just manner. They should also come forward," it said.

In a series of articles posted on his own page on online news agency, allegations were raised against the integrity of Justice Velasco in a member of the judiciary.

The publications cited complaints against the justice that had long been dismissed. *Gerald Quirozbiz, Inquirer Southern Luzon*



Mussels down 34 in East Samar

By Jess A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—At least 34 persons from two coastal villages in Eastern Samar fell ill after eating brown mussels.

Dr. Maria Theresa Campo, Balicuatro municipal health officer, said the victims experienced vomiting, nausea, weakness, numbness and headaches after they ate brown mussels locally known as "bagalun" gathered from Maloloson Bay.

Twelve of the victims were residents of Barangay Abuloc, while the rest lived in Barangay Naparasan. The two villages were along Manicani Bay where the victims gathered the brown mussels.

Of the 34 victims, several of them children, only four were admitted to the Dr. Ilpio Abrigo Memorial Hospital located in Balicuatro town, also in Eastern Samar, Campo said.

The victims exhibited symptoms similar to that of red tide food poisoning but they have yet to establish the cause of the victims' illness, Campo said.

All of the victims suffered paralytic food poisoning.

Quezon solon says Lakas has 'wells of logistics'

LUCENA CITY—WHAT FUND shortage?

A member of the administration party Lakas-Kampi-Christian Muslim Democrats (CMD) denied that the party was in turmoil over lack of campaign funds, saying that on the contrary, "it has wells of campaign logistics."

"There's no problem in the party funding. We have lots of it. As a matter of fact, our problem now is what to do with the funds," Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, Lakas-Kampi-CMD campaign manager in the provinces of Quezon, Laguna, Batangas and Marinduque, said in an interview here Saturday.

When pressed to elaborate, Suarez qualified his statement, saying: "What I mean is that the party is taking care of its candidates."

However, Suarez maintained that candidates should not solely depend on the party for funds.

"In essence, when a candidate runs, he must have funds to run the campaign. The candidate should not fully depend on the party to shoulder the cost of the election. The party is only there for support, not of house," he said.

Last week, propagandist Rolando Gorriaz, publicist of Lakas-Kampi-CMD vice presidential candidate Edu Manzano complained of lack of support for the latter from the administration party.

Some senatorial candidates of the administration party were also complaining about the party's apparent lack of funds, two months before the May 10 elections, and pointed to the dearth of TV and newspaper advertisements and campaign posters of Lakas-Kampi-CMD candidates.

Francis Manglapus, Lakas-Kampi-CMD secretary general, said the party has to exercise prudence in the use of funds.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

TATTOO ARTIST

Vice presidential candidate and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay plants a kiss on the arm of a woman who attended Binay's rally in Subic, Zambales, after signing his name on the woman's arm.

"DICKARD PANGLOSS O'REILLY HAS BEEN LAB-guarding chronic sick-ff bliss many years for Bostic's be-rounded with their families. There you the fortunate ones. Some never see their loved ones again. Anguished yearning sustained our administration as it passed from pop rage into stark, wishing back, crisis."

MARRY VILLAR
January 2010

GLOBAL Pinoy

Editor: Gerry Lirio

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This section is dedicated to Filipinos overseas toiling on land and at sea, in factories, in construction sites and in the homes of the world to secure a better life for their families. These are their stories.

RP-US alliance unfolds at the Waldorf

By Edna Bangsa-Salvosa
Lifestyle Editor

NEW JERSEY—Vivienne and Flora Carreon from Guagua, Pampanga were a young couple in their early 30s. He worked as a tennis supervisor at the Manila Polo Club while she was a teacher at the Guadalupe Elementary School in Makati. They were gainfully employed.

However, with four small children whose ages ranged from 1 ½ years to 9, they knew they had a long, responsibility-laden road ahead of them. Even as parents for the future was their very priority, they sought up ways they with this problem that they began to mull over some solutions. Winning the lottery was a fantasy; putting up a business without the capital and the know-how was daunting; starting a double job was tiring, physical risk.

"Let's go abroad," they decided, "and let's go together."

Kilometric queue

Back in the '80s, the exit to the US Embassy on Roxas Boulevard started as early as the pre-dawn hours. Vivienne and Flora numbed off with great resolve to take their places in the kilometric queue on the morning of May 15, 1982. By sunshine, they had exited the American compound in a dance of overpowering joy. They have been approved to travel to the US!

"We shall return," Flora promised Vivienne's mother in whose care they left their young children. They landed at JFK International Airport on July 8, 1982. It did not take them long to realize that they were on foreign soil. Everything looked and sounded different. The unfamiliarity of it all was somewhat intimidating. But they were undaunted. Never before had their hearts really beaten as one! They knew what they came here for—and they were going to get it. The thought of the children they left behind became their beacon of hope and courage as they began the circuitous journey towards permanent residency in America.

They worked as a caregiver-driver team for two filthy-rich families. Vivienne, amiably versatile, harshly for down, a wife was easier to find employers and request for sponsorships than than it is today. And as they hopped from one domestic employment to another, staying in a job for as long as the conditions were just and humane. As a nanny, Flora had a more personal connection with the people they worked for.

The rich and famous

She discovered that the rich and famous have feet of clay, that their tastes and foibles are just as tenuous. Maybe only on a glibber, more polished plane) as the ordinary mortals! Take that old dowager, for instance, who would say behind her friend's back, "The only reason she visits me is to come and eat my food." Or that unsociable industrialist who would shout (behind closed doors) Flora and Vera from their sleep all because she wanted company in her sleeplessness!

Internal conflicts

No doubt, the Filipina caregiver-to-America (or elsewhere) connects with a multi-faceted internal conflict. After her day's work was done and she lay down to rest her achy body, Flora is assailed with the qualms of homesickness and loneliness, and guilt.

Days and years, her mind grappled with the pathokinesis of leaving her own children to assiduously she's care while she ministered to the needs of other people's children in a foreign land. "What about my home? Who is its caretaker as I kept up the employer's dwelling? Was my switch from teaching to caregiving all worth it? What could be my friends' perceptions of my decision?" These thoughts intermixed up the years that stained her pillow and that, ironically but mercifully, also brought her to sleep. The next day she woke up with renewed hope and gratitude for the work that was providing her family a more comfortable life.

Streets of Paris

Together she and Vicente paddled along to the rhythm of the workaday world in an American household. It was humdrum for the most part but there were some high points, too. Travel was one of them. Flora walked the streets of Paris, rode the gondolas in Venice, ate in a restaurant in Milan, and viewed Moonga-Bay and St. Bart's in Barbados from the small window of a 30-seater light plane...all those she enjoyed gratis when she was babysitter of the kids of a wealthy Italian family. There she got tired of the constant moving about. She looked around for a more domesticated job and yet, she soon realized into one.

Historical curve

She would be employer's name stopped. Flora in her tracks and made her memory momentarily as her Philippine history. "I shall return," the words kept ringing in her ears and her thoughts were restless. She took the strong white hand offered in handshake and young maid by repeating figure-wishing through the pages of Lopez in a familiar World War II photograph. Flora found the name the grand dame used to introduce herself: Mrs. General Douglas MacArthur! "Of course, my honey madam," she mumbled, as the kept from taking back Mrs. MacArthur's hand and touching it to her forehead in the very Filipino gesture of great respect and deference.

The General's memory, precious in the two women in a "world's apart" kind of way, served to instantly bring down the walls of face and exterior. It made their tales years together in Mrs. MacArthur's plush quarters at the Waldorf Astoria a mutually enriching time.

VIP visitors

Flora got the chance to see up close some dignitaries who paid visits to Mrs. MacArthur. Esteemed relatives Dr. Helena Benitez, ex-President Fidel Ramos, Sen. Hillary Clinton, former First Lady Imelda Marcos, to mention a few. It must have been really interesting for Flora to witness the continuing RP-US alliance through the friendship fostered between Filipino dignitaries and Gen. MacArthur's widow.

In 2003, Mrs. MacArthur passed away and Flora turned on in her caregiving role.

That blessed year

Gifts the denouement of a feel-good play the kinds we treated out. Her children finally reunited their. Vicente had found himself a better and lower-stress job and later, Priscilla, and her family had also immigrated to America all on that same blessed year of 2003. Both women now work as pre-school teachers—still very much a caregiving occupation but with the added prestige of a related setting and entrepreneurial interest. Flora's tale of courage and adventure in a foreign land, undertaken in a spirit of self-giving and for the sole purpose of lifting family from the quagmire of economic deprivation, is a tale shared by other Filipino women in America and in other parts of the world. It is the story of a people who are resilient and resourceful, patient and persistent, gracious and generous.

Hopefully, these startling traits of individual Filipinos will, on a local front, way to cure the moral anachronism and mold a whole new generation of nation-builders. Then your coin is for true dreams!

RICH AND FAMOUS Flora Carreon's boss Mackenzie, widow of US Gen. Douglas MacArthur, inside her suite at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York where she met VIPs like Hillary Clinton and Imelda Marcos. "They have feet of clay," she says of the wealthy personages she served. Flora had a good time working for MacArthur until the maverick general's second wife died in 1964.

BLESSED BE THE TIES THAT BIND Flora and sister Priscilla (right) reunite in the United States after almost 20 years of separation. By then, Flora and husband Vicente had adjusted to work in the Land of Milk and Honey.

Financial aid, not reward for valiant service of war vets

THE 96 YEAR-OLD WWII VETeran who died on his way to getting his just reward (Global Pinoy, March 7) is crying for justice from his grave. For him—a Davaoeño surviving children were denied the right to inherit his lump-sum benefit.

Equity Bill declined

When President Barack Obama approved the $150-million appropriation last year for Filipino World War II veterans, many were elated and finally sighted justice. It was incorporated in the budget as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Package. It was part of the fund that was meant to stimulate the US economy.

For many advocates of Filipino veterans, this Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation fund of $198 million is a reward for the hard work and courage of our elderly veterans during the war.

But if this is a reward for service rendered, why is it that all veterans qualify for the benefit? How come the old soldier's surviving heirs are not entitled to the reward?

When the Republic Act of 1946 was enacted, the Filipino veterans who fought side by side with the American forces were divested of their status as US war veterans.

According to this 1946 legislation, the services of the Filipino World War II veterans during the war were not considered as "service for purposes of VETS benefits."

Hundreds of thousands of Filipino veterans were adversely affected by this legislation. Despite the fact that they fought under the same war against a common enemy in defense of democracy, the Filipino veterans were considered "second-class veterans."

In 1990, when the Immigration and Nationality act was amended to allow Filipino World War II veterans to become US citizens, the benefits did not materialize despite the fact that they became US citizens.

A legislation was needed to correct the injustice of the Rescission Act of 1946. Hence, beginning in 1993, bills were introduced in the US Congress to repeal its unjust provisions. Various bills were introduced in chamber of the Philippine veterans deserve to be treated equally—like the US veterans. However, with a budget deficit resulting from the Bush administration's political and economic policy, an equity bill at the US Congress lost its chance to pass into law. Had the bill been passed, the Filipino veterans would have had their equal and just reward.

At the administration changed, American legislators supportive of the veterans' cause came out with the proposition that instead of giving a monthly pension to the veterans, there would just be a one-time lump-sum payment to them. It was to be known the $198-million lump-sum benefit or the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation.

Compromise

A significant number of veterans benefited from the lump-sum benefit. Approximately $150 million of the $198 million fund earmarked has been disbursed to more than 12,000 Filipino veterans. There are still pending applications, approximately 14,595 veterans, awaiting adjudication.

The 8,713 applicants that were denied and the remaining 14,595 awaiting their claims are now anxious on whether they will ever be able to receive their benefit.

It must be understood that since this is not an equity legislation that attempted to correct the injustice stemming from the 1946 Rescission Act, this lump-sum benefit has limited applicability and erased further injustices especially to those home veterans who passed away prior to the passage of the lump-sum benefit.

Weeping widows

Widows of Filipino veterans were the first group that cried "unfair" when they were told that they are not included in the lump-sum benefits. Those surviving spouses were married to true and legitimate veterans but were singled out on a technicality.

Those who became veterans after Feb. 17, 2009 were able to file for the benefit and would receive their husband's lump-sum check.

Widows of the veterans before the enactment of the lump-sum benefit become a penalty for the weeping widows.

Surviving children

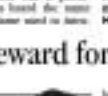
One of the specific beneficiaries in the provision of the lump-sum is that "only the surviving spouse" of the veteran may receive the lump-sum check if the veteran passes away after filing the application. Children of the veterans are explicitly excluded from receiving the lump-sum check.

This was what happened to the surviving children and grandchildren of the 96-year-old Pantoja. His children are unable to claim any lump-sum benefit from the thousand veterans who passed away within the claim was pending.

Last year, when the lump-sum benefit passed into law, we classified it as a qualified victory considering that it benefits certain veterans but does not have equal applicability to all who courageously served during World War II.

One year after its implementation, it has now become more obvious that this lump sum is not a reward for war sacrifices but simply a financial aid for some who can barely achieve continued the day of the passage of the law. Those veterans who did not survive the passage of the law are excluded.

The lump sum should not have been categorized as a veteran's benefit but rather a contest for the "survival of the fittest." The one who lives the longest with the spouse gets the prize. This lump sum is not about a burden but simply an aid that is part of the ultimate package. The veterans deserve better.



IMFO
Lourdes Santos Tancinco

The $198-million lump-sum package for the Filipino war veterans should have been called "Survival of the Fittest." The one who lives the longest gets the prize. Dying soldiers deserve better

World War II, Rescission Act, Harold Akaka and Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, were supportive of the Filipino veterans' cause. They maintain that Filipino veterans deserve to be treated equally—like the US veterans. However, with a budget deficit resulting from the Bush administration's political and economic policy, an equity bill at the US Congress

Readers may be reached at lmf@inquirer.com.ph or at 897-2175.

Mikey as blue guards' party-list nominee opposed

BIRD WATCHING
A little egret takes a break while two black-crowned night herons scrap over prey while hunting for food in the swamp behind the coastal mall in Parañaque City. JOE VALDEZ

By Beverly T. Fleichridad

PAMPANGA REP. JUAN MIGUEL "Mikey" Arroyo gave up a chance to run for a third congressional term in favor of his mother, President Macapagal-Arroyo, who will be standing for his Pampanga 2nd district seat.

But he could still enter Congress through the back door, via one of the party-list seats representing, of all people, security guards.

Some militant groups, which have been campaigning to block the entry of relatives and known allies of President Arroyo through the party-list system, claim that Mikey is the nominee of Ang Galing Pinoy, a party-list group representing the "marginalized" interests of security guards, who are also known as blue guards.

Members of Bayan Muna, Kabataan, Anakbayan, Gabriela and Akbayan yesterday went around Mandaluyong City, garbed in mourning apparatus for a petition to disqualify those that they claimed were Arroyo-backed nominees of "pseudo-party-list" groups representing the May elections.

The Kabataan party-list group, which claims a membership of 200,000, plans to gather one million signatures while affiliated groups in the provinces will simultaneously start their own signature drive.

"We cannot tolerate that an additional lawyer inside the House of Representatives will be added to the growing number of lawyer-dominated that will eventually push for their vested interests," said Mark Louie Aquino, a Kabataan nominee.

He said that Buwaganga, a party-list group representing security-conscious, has for its nominee Maria Lourdes Arroyo, a sister of the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

The campaign has branded Ang Galing, 1-UTAK, Buwaganga, Bantay and A Teacher as "pseudo-party list" groups.

1-UTAK made it to Kabataan's "pseudo" list when it floated plans of making Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes its first nominee.

Aquino and the party-list nominee-being shared and manipulated by Arroyo allies who are making a claim to several congressional seats with the ultimate goal of supporting the supposed bid of Mr. Arroyo to return to power as prime minister.

The other party-list groups in Kabataan's pseudo list are Agbayani Tinipuyo Bokasyon, Abot Pilipino, Akbay Pinoy OFW, Anagan Ning Kababayan Pilipinas (Anak), Bidoo Ka, Bigkis, Buklurang Pinoy Labor Association, Kalahi and League of Youth for Peace Advancement (Lypad).

Pastor Q getting mixed messages from Cory, ma

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—IT'S GETTING there has even the divine may be having a hard time discerning the candidates.

Evangelist Apollo Quiboloy on Friday said he had had "bridal visions" about whom to support for president.

But while waiting for "divine intervention," he said he was torn between Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Sen. Manuel "Manny" Villar.

Quiboloy is the leader of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, The Name Above Every Name, which claims about four million members.

In the 2001 elections, Quiboloy supported President Macapagal-Arroyo after he said he "saw" her leading the country.

Candidates big and small have been making a bee line to his headquarters, seeking his blessing and all those votes.

In the present time, Quiboloy said he had his first "vision" on Dec. 28 last year, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

He said that while praying on the prayer mountain in Barangay Tamugong, Calinan district here, a revelation came to him.

In it, he was talking to the late President Corazon Aquino, who bade him goodbye.

"We have such other good-bye, I want to where I was her to get my Bible and I found her there, reading the Bible. And there was a red rose. She asked me to bless Noynoy. I told her I would pray for him," Quiboloy told reporters here.

He said another vision came to him on Jan. 25, and this time it was his mother, Maria, who had passed away in 1996.

Quiboloy said his mother asked him to bless Villar.

"Yeah, si Manny ang gusto ko. Pareho ko silang two days (Dios, I'm for Villar. Can you bless him)?" the pastor said his mother told him.

"I will be spending more time praying on prayer mountain and waiting for the final revelation," he said.

Quiboloy said he would announce the "final revelation" on April 22, his birthday.

Aquino, meanwhile, took time off from his campaign on Friday to meet with Quiboloy here.

Incidentally, Aquino and Villar named Quiboloy's on last week after both failed to show up for the Bukidnon 2010 presidential forum the pastor had organized.

He said something to the effect that one should honor his commitments.

Aquino had confirmed his attendance in the March 9 Forum, "pero" for whom I found plans of making Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes its first nominee.

Aquino and the party-list nominee-being shared and manipulated by Arroyo allies who are making a claim to several congressional seats with the ultimate goal of supporting the supposed bid of Mr. Arroyo to return to power as prime minister.

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Aquino e-mailed Quiboloy at the last minute to say he had an "urgent matter that could be aggravated by changes in air pressure, such as when flying.

On Friday, when they finally met, Quiboloy appeared forgiving.

"Noong panahon na yun di kasinggaya-tanggap (At the time I could not forgive him). At least now he's here," a smiling Quiboloy said, adding that "there are things that are really beyond his (Aquino's) control."

Aquino told he felt Quiboloy's kindness. He described their meeting as "pleasant."

Quiboloy, however, appeared to be still piqued at Villar.

"At least si Noy is now here. Si Manny hindi pa nagpapakita (Manny has not shown his face)," Quiboloy said.

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Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Ulanday

OUTREACH PROGRAM

Metro moms bond for baby wellness

NEVER a dull moment during LATCH's "intensive and fun" three-hour workshops on breastfeeding. RICHARD VILLAVICENCIO

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE CELEBRATION OF National Month (pregnant women) Day on the 10th of March every year highlights the significance of what is considered by many as life's greatest miracle: A mother carrying a new human being in her womb.

While pregnancy is often a cause for happiness and celebration, it is also a time to make big decisions for the new mom that would have tremendous and long-term impacts on the baby's life.

One of these crucial decisions, according to a nonprofit organization focused on lactation education, is how to feed the child.

"More often than not, pregnant moms do not give serious thought to the manner of feeding their newborns. Baby clothes, appliances and furniture always occupy the top of an excited mother's agenda," said Jen CC Tan, one of the founding members of LATCH, short for Lactation, Attachment, Training, Counseling and Help.

Support services

Aimed at taking the guesswork out of breastfeeding, the organization is composed of trained peer counselors and volunteers moms in Metro Manila offering mothers-to-another support and services.

"Our goal is to reach out and talk to as many pregnant moms as possible, because it is at this stage when they make up their minds on whether or not to breastfeed their babies," Tan said.

In 2009, Mia Castello—who would later become one of founders of the group—met with doctors at The Medical City in Pasig to discuss the idea of another breastfeeding support.

Castello, who had given a breastfeeding testimonial earlier that year, was surprised at the positive feedback she received from mothers who loved her speech. Inspired by these moms, she wrote to Dr. Joy Lim of Medical City saying she would like to volunteer to support mothers who chose to breastfeed their babies.

While Castello chatting the morning with Lim was her good friend Bailag Aquino-Dee, a certified breastfeeding counselor in Canada. This was how the idea of putting up a group came about.

Dee and Castello then invited other women to join them in their breastfeeding campaign that stressed what should be every child's right and every mom's duty and responsibility. Corinne Pascua-Melchiorri, Amelie Ann Alba, Sylvia Maldemar and Ani Ongpin became part of LATCH in September 2009.

The group began their workshops in Medical City, which was very supportive of the activity because of the low breastfeeding rate among mothers.

Tan said the three-hour workshops, entitled "Best Beginnings," cover the benefits and advantages of breastfeeding, breastfeeding myths, the sexual essence of latching and positioning the baby, and concerns that come with mothers returning to work at the end of their maternity leaves.

Interactive

"Our workshops, that are interactive and fun, target pregnant women," Tan said. The activity session here breast milk is first classified by robots everything else is measured, and here there are countless practical resources breastfeed.

Breast milk, according to LATCH resources, is different from infant formula because it contains more than 200 nutrients perfect for a baby's growth. More than food, breast milk is a living substance that has infection-fighting ingredients to meet a baby's growing needs.

LATCH researchers also point out that having a healthy baby means a happier mom and dad. No expensive infant formula, less absences from work and less trips to the pediatrician also mean less expenses for the family with parents saving as much as P45,000 in the first year of the baby's life.

"We also have a distinctly LATCH portion in our workshops on latching and soothing the baby by organizing the participants

METRO, A20

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Outreach program: Metro moms bond for baby wellness

From page A17

into smaller groups to help them understand the technical side of breastfeeding," he said.

The workshops have been successful in spreading the word.

"Our presence in social networking sites such as Facebook, and the fact many of us in LATCH are working moms and "mompreneurs" helped a lot in the growing awareness about our organization," Tan said.

Many mothers who recovered in breastfeeding their babies want to pay it forward by training to become peer counselors. Last year, the LATCH founders decided to expand the group's membership and conferred a peer counselor training program.

With the addition of 20 member trainees, LATCH can engage in more activities and services for new moms, such as hospital or home visits and phone/SOS/e-mail support.

"As counselors, we are trained to listen well to the moms who seek help from us," Tan said, adding that moms usually need assurance that they are on the right track. "They need a friendly voice saying we've been there, done that." We are trained to probe further into the concerns of breastfeeding mothers," she pointed out.

While the counselors' main aim is to inform and encourage pregnant women, they stress that the first two weeks are very important in assessing the breastfeeding relationship between mom and baby.

"If a mom gives up during this crucial period, there is a big possibility that she will give up on breastfeeding altogether," Tan said.

The support of peer counselors is indispensable during this time, when the mother has to contend with many breastfeeding barriers such as time and social constraints, lack of sound support, especially from their own families, doubts, guilt, and the general lack of confidence in themselves and their bodies' natural capability to feed their babies.

Not alone

"It is important for mothers to feel that they are not alone in their fears, and equally important for them to get a pat on the back for even the smallest achievements in breastfeeding," Tan said.

Abbott, a marketing consultant at a pharmaceutical company apart from managing her own business, Tan shares her experiences as volunteers.

"I thought breastfeeding was an easy job. While there are many mothers who are extremely lucky, I had to deal with sore nipples and clumps," recalled Tan, who later succeeded in breastfeeding her two boys.

LATCH has also been involved in other activities in Metro Manila, including breastfeeding awareness talks in the malls and joining disaster relief efforts such as the breastfeeding initiative at the Ultra in Pasig City in the aftermath of Tropical Storm "Ondoy" last year.

Jennifer Ong, another working mom who volunteers for LATCH, participated in the Del. 8 activity where they distributed pasteurized breast milk donated by the Philippine General Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

"We wanted to educate the public on the importance of milk donation to serve the requirements of premature and sickly babies whose mothers cannot fully provide breast milk," Ong said.

She added that calamities such as Ondoy and Typhoon "Pepeng" stressed how important breastfeeding is, especially in the absence of clean, safe water for babies.

Ong, who is still breastfeeding her 2-year-old daughter, said breastfeeding is a no-brainer in conditions.

"Most of the time, mothers are doing it right and just need reassurance," she said. "The knowledge that breastfeeding is the best option and the reaffirmation of this knowledge through mother-to-mother support are the keys to a successful breastfeeding program."

Interested mothers may visit the LATCH website at www.thepeerfactor.com

THE SUPPORT of peer counselors is important for mothers to feel that they are not alone in their fears, according to LATCH volunteers.

RETURN OF THE QC NATIVE

Track record counts, says mayoral bet

By Julie M. Aurelio

FITTED AGAINST CANDIDATES young enough to be his grandchildren, former Quezon City Mayor Ismael Mathay is counting on credentials and followers he has a fighting chance because of his years of experience.

"I have the track record and experience," he told reporters yesterday at a forum in Quezon City.

Mathay, who served as city mayor from 1992 to 2001, emptied many when he filed last year his certificate of candidacy for mayor with an independent ticket.

His central policy plank is running against incumbent Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista, former Environment Secretary Mike Defensor, Congressman Anthe Jesus Suntay, and city Councilor Ariel Inton.

Now 77 years old, Mathay said he is confident he can still handle the rigors of running the city government.

"All I need is a pen and paper to give the right orders and political decisions. I won't be the one who will actually carry the blocks or hold a new building," he quipped.

Running as an independent candidate, Mathay said he believes Quezon City residents would still choose him if they were to decide for themselves.

He was succeeded in 2001 by incumbent city Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr., who is now seeking a congressional post in the city's fourth district.

During his filing of his candidacy papers last year, Mathay said he is returning to his old post to continue his brand of public service. One of the highlights of his platform is to rationalize the city government's spending program to meet the demands of the expanding population.

Part of Mathay's platform will include revitalized programs on health, education, housing and peace and order and creating new jobs.

"We need to expand commercial and business centers similar to Eastwood City and Silver Center in Cubao, to raise the income tax structure and improve business environment in the city," he said.

Mathay added that he is planning to review a decided hospitalization assistance program and expand Medicare coverage.

New police station opens in Fairview

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON CITY POLICE DISTRICT (QCPD) has inaugurated a new home for its police station in Fairview.

The P38-million structure on Pearl Street was built by the city government to replace the old police station along Commonwealth Avenue near Don Jose Subdivision.

Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said the construction of modern police stations is part of the city government's efforts to address street crimes.

The building was formally opened on Thursday.

"This highlights the city government's continuing effort to spread the gains of the city's development so that growing communities where police visibility is much needed," the city mayor said.

The Fairview police station has jurisdiction over barangays Sta. Lucia, Pairview, Kaligayahan, Greater Lagro, Payong Pinili and North Fairview.

It is the fourth built by the city government, the others are stations in Masambong, Batasan 6 in Payatas and station 6 in Bagumbayan.

"The construction of more police stations, especially in the city's crowded communities, also aims to level the police population ratio in Quezon City," Belmonte explained.

He added that the city government is also dedicated to getting more patrol cars, communication equipment, firearms and ammunition to help strengthen the QCPD's peacekeeping efforts.

MetroBriefs

Watch out for this type of 'fresh' fish

THE MANILA government yesterday warned the public against buying fish allegedly dyed with artificial coloring to make it appear fresh. The warning came after the city's Veterinary Inspection Board (VIB) arrested at least 40 sellers of "kalaguing bakal" that were reportedly soaked in artificial coloring at the Aristocrats Market in Diamantitik. City Administrator Jesus Mari Marcaro said the fish were confiscated after members of the VIB inspected the stalls at the wet market. Jonabilo Diaz, team leader of the VIB Special Meat Squad, apparently noticed the suspiciously dark color of fish sold by vendor Jonalyn Dela Cruz. When questioned, Dela Cruz allegedly admitted that they were using food coloring to make her fish for sale appear fresh. Citing health risks posed by the illegal practice, Marcaro said Dela Cruz will no longer be permitted to sell in the area. He added that the vendor will be charged with violation of City Ordinance 1500 Section 008 or violating the law on adulteration of commercial products. Marcaro also assured the public that they would continue to monitor markets in the city to protect residents and consumers against unscrupulous traders.

TRIX R. TORRES

Navotas bares Fire Prevention Month activities

THE NAVOTAS City government, headed by Mayor Toby Tiangco, with local bureau of Fire Protection personnel, have joined hands to make residents understand the fatal effects of mishandling fire incidents. The city is holding a series of month-long activities in line with the theme "Sumunog ka ng pansinin! Magkaisa sa kampanya laban sa sunog" (Be aware! Unite in fire prevention) through active community participation" to mark the observance of Fire Prevention Month this March. Tiangco issued a directive to officials of the fire department, the public information office, barangay councils, the barangay operations center and other departments concerned to foster awareness of the necessity of fire prevention. He also instructed the business permits and licensing office to ensure that all registered establishments in the city are equipped with fire right to evacuation as well as provided with fire alarms that are inspected regularly in coordination with the engineering department. The local disaster and coordinating council were also reminded by the mayor to schedule the holding of regular fire drills and lectures in all public and private schools. In a report submitted to Tiangco by Chief Insp. Felix Mateo, BFP-Navotas City Fire Marshal, 15 fire incidents were registered last year. Electrical, structural and combustible were the most up the causes of these incidents. Meanwhile, Tiangco assured the public that the city government is always on alert, together with the disaster council, fire department, volunteer groups and the Bantalan Joint Rescue Team headed by John Rey Tiangco. "I always believe that it is better to be safe than sorry," he added. "I ask my fellow Navoteños to be vigilant, alert and cooperative. Let us join hands to ensure a fire-free summer in our city."

Thousands of Thaksin protesters swamp Bangkok

BANGKOK—TENS OF THOUSANDS of supporters of deposed premier Thaksin Shinawatra streamed through militarized checkpoints into the capital on Saturday as they headed to a rally aimed at toppling the government.

Thai authorities have deployed a 50,000-strong security force, including soldiers, to patrol the streets and search protesters as they entered the city, fearing some could incite violence ahead of Sunday's main rally.

Some 33,000 protesters in their signature red shirts passed through the heavily checkpoints in Ayutthaya, 80 kilometres north of Bangkok, the provincial governor told AFP.

Governor Wittaya Hongsong said the Red Shirts, wearing red flags and traveling mostly by pick-up truck and car, had been searched by 700 unarmed soldiers and police without incident.

One Red Shirt leader, Kwanchai Praipana, said most protesters from the rural northeast had already reached Bangkok.

"All of our Red Shirts have already arrived," he told AFP. "We've been here for a long fight this time but if the government dissolves the house today or on Sunday there we are ready to disperse and go home," he added.

Organizers insist the protests will be peaceful, but the government has enacted the rarely-imposed Internal Security Act to centralize the rally, allowing authorities to set up checkpoints, impose curfews and limit movements.

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, who has refused to bow to the protesters' demand to step down and call elections, spoke to reporters after meeting with international top brass at a military barracks on Saturday.

"We should not be complacent because there are some groups of people still planning to create violence and cause confrontations," said Abhisit, who has cancelled a weekend trip to Australia because of the rally.

More-upscale police and protestors trickling into the rally site near government and military headquarters, but only Monday's traffic and set up giant projection and mobile toilets are to a large stage.

The government has lowered its estimate of expected turnout at the rally to 70,000, but the Red Shirts say the figure will be nearer 600,000.

The protests come two weeks after Thailand's top court confiscated $1.4 billion of Thaksin's assets, and are the latest chapter in a political crisis that has beset Thailand since Thaksin was toppled in a 2006 coup.

Thaksin, who has been living mostly in Dubai to escape a two-year jail term for corruption at home, has been encouraging his supporters using text messages and his Twitter page.

"Thank you for your dedication...I want to give my support to the people in the north," he told his followers on Twitter on Saturday. AFP

2 suicide blasts kill 57 in Pakistan

A PAKISTANI family mourns a death in the suicide bombings on March 12. AP

LAHORE, PAKISTAN—TWIN SUICIDE attacks seconds apart targeted the Pakistani military on Friday, killing up to 57 people in the second attack on his security forces in the country's cultural capital this week.

On Friday, two suicide bombers walked up to Army vehicles in the crowded R.A Bazaar area of Lahore, blowing themselves up as people ran down to eat before the main Muslim weekly prayers, police said.

Later that evening, the small bombs exploded elsewhere in Lahore causing no casualties and only minor damages, police said.

"We have the heads of both the bombers. There was an interval of 15 seconds between the two attacks. They were on foot. Their target was Army vehicles," said police official Chaudhry Mohammad Shafiq.

A total of 57 people have been killed and 134 were wounded in these suicide attacks," Shafiq declared.

He added that 12 seriously injured had died overnight in different hospitals.

A military statement said eight Army personnel were among the dead.

Lahore, a city of eight million, has been increasingly subject to Taliban and al-Qaida linked attacks in a particular 'bombing campaign' that has killed more than 3,000 people in three years.

The bombers targeted the cantonment, home to Army officials and military installations, as well as hospitals and schools run by the military. There were civilian homes, shops and restaurants in the vicinity of the attack. AFP

Court says thimerosal did not cause autism

WASHINGTON—THE VACCINE additive thimerosal is not to blame for autism, a special federal court ruled on Friday in a long-running battle by parents convinced there is a connection.

While expressing sympathy for the parents involved in the emotionally charged cases, the court concluded they had failed to show a connection between the mercury-containing preservative and autism.

"Such families must cope every day with tremendous challenges in caring for their autistic children, and all are deserving of sympathy and admiration," special master George Hastings Jr wrote.

But, he added, Congress designed the vaccine compensation program only for families whose injury or disability can be shown to be linked to a vaccine and that has not been done in this case.

The ruling came in the so-called vaccine court, a special branch of the US Court of Federal Claims established to handle claims of injury from vaccines. It can be appealed in federal court.

The parents presented expert witnesses who argued mercury can have a variety of effects on the brain, but the ruling said none of them offered opinions in the cases of autism in the three specific cases argued. They testified that mercury can affect a number of biological processes, including abnormal metabolism in children.

Special master Denise K. Vowell noted that in order to succeed in their action, the parents would have to show "the exquisitely small amounts of mercury" that reach the brain from vaccines can produce devastating effects that far larger amounts, from other sources do not. The ruling said the parents were arguing that the effects from mercury in vaccines differ from mercury's known effects on the brain. Vowell concluded that the parents had failed to establish that their child's condition was caused or aggravated by mercury from vaccines.

Friday's decision that autism is not caused by thimerosal alone followed a parallel ruling in 2009 that autism is not caused by the combination of vaccines with thimerosal and other vaccines.

The cases had been divided into three theories about a vaccine-autism relationship for the court to consider. The 2009 ruling rejected a theory that thimerosal can cause autism when combined with the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine. After that, a theory that certain vaccines alone cause autism was dropped. Friday's decision covers the last of the three theories, that thimerosal-containing vaccines alone can cause autism.

The ruling doesn't necessarily mean an end to the dispute, however, with appeals to other courts available.

The new ruling was welcomed by Dr Paul Offit of Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who said the autism theory had "already had its day in science court and failed to hold up."

But the controversy has cast a pall over vaccines, causing some parents to avoid them. He noted, "It's very hard to reassure people after you have caused them."

On the other side of the issue, a group backing the parents' theory charged that the vaccine court was more interested in government policy than protecting children.

"The deck is stacked against families in vaccine court. Government attorneys defend a government program, using government-hired science, before government judges," Rebecca Estepp, of the Coalition for Vaccine Safety said in a statement. AP

China warns Google again

BEIJING—ONE OF CHINA'S TOP Internet regulators warned bluntly on Friday that any move by Google to stop censoring its Chinese search engine would be "irresponsible" and would draw a response from the Beijing government.

The statement by Li Yihong, China's minister of industry and information technology, followed a statement on Wednesday by Google's chief executive officer, Eric Schmidt, that "something will happen soon" in the two-month standoff over Internet censorship between the firm and the Chinese government.

But it was no cause for alarm on Friday what that something might be then it was two months ago, when Google executives first threatened to pull out of China unless the government stopped forcing it to censor the results of users' Internet searches.

Chinese journalists gathered outside Google's Beijing office on Friday said they had heard the company was planning to close its doors late. But a Google spokesperson denied that it is "finalizing similar to the government-run English-language newspaper, China Daily.

Google's China businesses "are still as normal," and rumors that the company had retired its Chinese advertising agencies to some work were not true, the spokesperson, Nicolas Pleng, told the newspaper. At Google's headquarters in Mountain View, California, another spokesperson, Jill Hazelbaker, declined to comment on the matter. Internet users on any other aspect of business with China.

A company spokesperson said on Weibo.com that Google expected the dispute to be settled "in weeks, not months."

Speaking on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the National People's Congress, China's party-controlled legislature, Li said that he hoped for an amicable resolution to the standoff. But he gave no indication that the government would ease the censorship rules that are at the heart of Google's grievances. NYT

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

Pope OK'd housing for pedophile priest

VATICAN CITY—POPE Benedict XVI once helped get housing for a clergyman suspected of child sex abuse, it emerged on Friday, as the pontiff met the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany over a growing pedophile priest scandal.

Just hours after archbishop Reinhard Marx confessed an apology to victims of predator priests in Germany, Pope Benedict's former diocese of Munich confirmed a report that, as an archbishop in 1980, the pontiff approved housing for the priest, who was to undergo therapy.

The priest—identified only as H.—had been accused of fondling an 11-year-old boy in northern coal city, according to the Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper.

"It was decided in 1980 to give H. accommodation in a rectory so that he could receive therapy. The archbishop (Pope Benedict) took part in this decision," the German diocese of Munich and Freising said in a statement.

Six years later, the priest was given a suspended prison sentence for child sex offenses. The archdiocese said he still works in Bavaria, with no known repeat violations.

The disclosure added to a widening scandal in Germany that had already sent shock to Pope Benedict's brother Georg Ratzinger, a former choir master.

The first revelations emerged in January when an elite Jesuit school in Berlin admitted systematic sexual abuse of pupils by two priests in the 1970s and 1980s.

Among other boarding schools implicated is one attached to the Domspatzen. "Carmina Burana" conductor Georg Ratzinger, the pontiff's 86-year-old brother, was in charge of the Domspatzen choir from 1964 to 1994—save "seven chaotic months" in 1970.

Ratzinger, 86, said on Tuesday that the alleged sexual abuse in the 1950s and 1960s—before his time—were "news (to) me."

A proliferation of abuse scandals across Europe has prompted deep soul-searching among Church leaders, not least in Germany where Pope Benedict, a scholarly theologian, was born in 1927.

Zollitsch said after meeting with the Pope on Friday: "I want to report here in Rome the apology that I made two weeks ago." He also announced the creation of a watchdog to oversee abuse.

Pope Benedict meanwhile defended priestly celibacy, calling it "the sign of full devotion" and of an "undivided commitment to the Lord." His comments came a day after Archbishop of Vienna Christoph Schoenborn called for an unflinching examination of the possible roots of child sex abuse by priests, saying it should include the issue of celibacy.

Another of Austria's most senior clerics, the Archbishop of Salzburg Alois Kothgasser, also said the Church must ask itself whether celibacy is still an appropriate way of life for priests. (See sidebar) AFP

POPE Benedict XVI blessing the faithful during his weekly general audience at the Vatican on March 16 —AFP

Celibacy debate re-emerges amid Church abuse scandal

PARIS—LIKE A FIRE THAT CAN'T BE stamped out, the issue of priestly celibacy has re-emerged at the center of the debate about how to prevent the child sexual abuse scandals now haunting the Roman Catholic Church.

And just as persistently Pope Benedict has once again ruled out changing the practice dating back to the 12th century. He said on Friday that voluntary chastity was a gift from God that should not be given up to "passing cultural fashions." "Men and women these days just want us to be priests to the end, and nothing else," he told 900 participants at a Vatican conference about the priesthood.

The comments came as several senior prelates in German-speaking countries suggested a link between abuse and the priest's vow of chastity and called for more open discussion in the Church about celibacy and priests' sexuality.

Many media commentators and some liberal Catholics, such as Italian theologian Hans Kung, have blamed the scandal rings first for the recent scandals in Germany, Austria, Netherlands and Ireland and called for the rule to be scrapped.

"Times have changed, and society too, and the Church will have to consider how this type of life can be maintained or whether has to change," Salzburg Archbishop Alois Kothgasser told an Austria's ORF television on Thursday evening.

In a classroom newsletter, Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna said the Church had to ask difficult questions about the abuse scandals. "That includes the issue of celibacy and the personal development of priests, he wrote.

Some of the prelates suggested ending celibacy. Schoenborn insisted on Friday his call to discuss the role did not mean scrapping it: "If celibacy were the reason for sexual abuse, there wouldn't be any abuse in the rest of society," he said.

Bishop Stefan Ackermann, the German Church's ombudsman for abuse cases, said the public often suspected all priests of being sexually abnormal when these scandals arose. "This view does not correspond to reality," he said on ZDF television.

But spurred by the scandals, they are speaking up more about the need to help priests deal with sexuality and explaining to the public a lifestyle so out of step with today's lives entails that many people cannot understand it.

"But because our doctor's line was one's sexuality doesn't seem it's been turned off. So, I must see how I treat sexuality and learn to deal with it," Hamburg Auxiliary Bishop Hans-Jochen Jaschke explained to German Radio on Friday.

Kirchgasser told his interviewer he sometimes wished he had a family, especially when he met "beautiful people," and called this a "very natural" human feeling.

Jaschke said celibacy was not the reason for sexual abuse but added: "The celibate lifestyle can attract people who have an abnormal sexuality and cannot live out their sexuality in those lives. That's where a dangerous situation can arise." Professor Klaus Beier, head of the Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine at Berlin's Charite Hospital, told the ZDF discussion round that pedophile tendencies developed at puberty and were not influenced by celibacy.

But he added: "Celibacy attracts pedophiles into the service of the Catholic Church."

Jaschke suggested States open the priesthood to so-called "proven men," but the Vatican has consistently rejected the idea of ordaining older married men as priests.

The Eastern Rites of the Catholic Church allow married priests but they cannot become bishops, the same policy as the Orthodox churches use. Anglican and Protestant churches have married clergy and some allow women in for ordained.

Pope Benedict's recent offer to disaffected Anglicans to become Catholics could bring another group of married priests into the Roman Church. Reuters

INQUIRER mobile news

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Two separate vehicular accidents, a few minutes apart, causes traffic jam along southbound lane of C-5 in Pasig City, says Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

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2nd US woman held in plot to kill cartoonist

WASHINGTON—A SECOND AMERican Muslim woman has been arrested in Ireland on charges of conspiracy to kill a Swedish cartoonist who made fun of the Prophet Mohammed, The Wall Street Journal reported late Friday.

The newspaper identified the woman as Jamie Paulin-Ramirez, 31, who worked as a medical assistant in Louisville, Colorado, but recently moved to Denver and then to New York.

Paulin-Ramirez is now in the custody of the Irish police, along with six other individuals, arrested as part of an investigation into a conspiracy to murder the cartoonist.

She is the second American woman held in the case, the paper said.

Earlier this week, an indictment was unsealed against Colleen LaRose, 46, a suburban Philadelphia resident who authorities said used the web alias "Jihad Jane." LaRose was accused of plotting to kill the cartoonist and attempting to recruit radical Muslims via the Internet, according to The Journal.

She was arrested in October and charged with providing material support to terrorists, the paper said. AFP

Clinton hits Israel over settler homes

CLINTON —AFP

WASHINGTON—US SECRETary of State Hillary Clinton has rebuked Israel for plans to build new settler homes, saying it sent a "deeply negative signal" about Israel's ties to its top ally.

In unusually harsh words, Clinton told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Washington strongly objected to the announcement's made during a Israel trip to Israel by US Vice President Joe Biden.

"The United States could send the announcement a deeply negative signal about Israel's approach to the bilateral relationship," the top US diplomat told Netanyahu in an early Friday morning telephone call.

Her comments were backed by the Middle East Quartet—made up of the European Union, the US, Russia and the United Nations—which said in a statement that it "condemns Israel's decision to advance planning for new housing units in east Jerusalem."

The Quartet said that unilateral actions taken by either party to the Middle East peace process "will not be recognized by the international community."

Clinton heaped further scorn on the Jewish state's announcement after speaking with Netanyahu.

"The announcement of this settlement, the very day that the vice president was there, was troubling," she told CNN in an interview.

"I mean, it was really just an unfortunate and difficult moment for everyone." It was an unusually strong rebuke from the United States for its main regional ally, and at most unprecedented in decades of strong ties.

In June 1990, secretary of state James Baker, frustrated by the intransigence of Israel's then prime minister Yitzhak Shamir, told the Israelis "When you're serious about peace, call us." But while today's frustrations also stem from the stalemated Middle East peace process, the political landscape is completely different, analysts said. AFP

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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ 25ers nail 2nd semifinal seat /A25

Sunday SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

■ Lakers survive furious Suns /A30

'The Event' is here

- Pacquiao makes weight with room to spare
- Pacman victims don't think Clottey has a chance
- Locksmith may hold key to an upset

Stories on Page A24

Pacquiao easily makes weight

Champ feasts before scales check; Clottey on the dot

By Roy Luarca

FRIENDLY? Pacquiao says he fighter and smaller than Joshua Clottey (right), but he's definitely the "fuller" fighter.

ARLINGTON, TEXAS—IT'S EASY TO UNderstand why Manny Pacquiao was all smiles when he climbed the scale on Friday during the official weigh-in at The Ballpark in Arlington Cowboys Stadium here.

The World Boxing Organization welterweight champion came in at his ideal weight within the 147-pound limit of his title defense against Ghanaian Joshua Clottey on Saturday (Sunday in Manila).

Pacquiao arrived to the crowd of around 2,500 that swelled the fully-seated stadium when announced that he weighed 140 3/4 pounds, 1 1/4 lighter than Clottey, who registered the exact weight limit of 147 until talks that he might have consented to make weight.

The 5-foot-6 Pacquiao was still trying to bulk up in the morning as reports appear like evening side by side with the 5-10 Clottey.

Never having had to diet throughout his seven-year training camp at the Wild Card Gym in Hollywood, Pacquiao woke up at 1:30 a.m. and even had a full breakfast of eggs, grilled pork, beef and steamed rice.

After walking around the confines of the Gaylord Texan Hotel to loosen up, Pacquiao's weight fell to 142, prompting conditioning trainer Alex Ariza to have him take another hour's rest of steak, steamed asparagus and rice washed down by lots of water.

In contrast, Clottey was seen jumping rope and running wearing a thermal suit on Thursday, an indication that he was still overweight.

The negotiations also confirmed when Clottey underwent an unofficial weigh-in an hour before the official proceedings.

Already at his heaviest in a 13-year career, Pacquiao is expected to gain weight further, perhaps breaking the 150-lb barrier for the first time.

Clottey weighed in at 144 Ringside Corner last Nov. 14 then flunked the step at 149.

Clottey's trainer, Lenny DeAcres, had earlier announced that his ward will fluctuate around 155-lb, but there were reports that Clottey will bulk up to as heavy as 160 lb to fight right.

"The heavier he comes in, the happier I will be," said Roach, a three-time Trainer of the Year, explaining that "a round guy, it does slow. If you can roll and do a fighter-slugger."

And if that happens, Pacquiao's vaunted speed, power and volume punches will seem down Clottey's defense and make the diminutive southpaw unstopping body blows.

After studying tapes of Clottey's previous fights, Roach stated some fundamental mistakes, prompting him to predict a knockout in the later stages.

But after watching Pacquiao bruise through the seven-week training camp and dominate his sparmates, Roach lowered it to an unanimous call.

Doubtful to contradict Roach, saying that his ward will beat Pacquiao and take the crown to Ghana.

WRONG COMBINATION

Locksmith finds key to upset

By Recah Trinidad

IT'S A BIT ODDLY BUT DO TAKE note of what trainer Lenny DeAcres had to say on how Joshua Clottey could create an upset today.

The key to a Clottey win could be a strong combination, said DeAcres, a locksmith based in New York.

Hmm, is that for?

DeAcres knows that it will take only one mistake by Pacquiao and a well-placed punch to unstitch the draw it can upset," DeAcres told The Smith of the New York Daily News.

That, of course, was a little exaggerated. Clottey will definitely need more than one single right-cross by Pacquiao in order to break in and score.

ANALYSIS

In short, there will a premium of a punching genius for Pacquiao. But Clottey's new trainer, most noted as a talisman, was not saying how Clottey can't afford to drop a move in the arena.

All DeAcres wanted to say was that they too had done the necessary preparations and adjustments.

"If anyone in the corner before, he's one," DeAcres added.

He was right. Brute could mean pain, but enough for his fighter to lose sympathy. His order, therefore, for Clottey was to stay composed.

There's a strict command not to get sucked into a wild, rushing, wilting, free-wheeling slug-out.

DeAcres did not say if, but he's fully aware that Pacquiao, the fastest speed demon in the pound-for-pound world today, could also dip into an angel once put on the defensive.

PACQUIAO-Cassano out

Top Pinoy boxing mind picks Manny, with one reservation

By Recah Trinidad

THE ODDS CAN mainly in favor of an explosive fight today, with Manny Pacquiao expected to overwhelm Joshua Clottey.

How The Force will finish is, of course, impossible to predict.

However, Joshua Clottey's big and still-growing record can only mean one thing: what he made the weight in a single try yesterday.

On the other hand, Freddie Roach was definitely not talking through his hat when he advised Team Pacquiao at the pre-fight presser that Clottey's height has "an edge" in the fight.

Height is protection?

"Yes, maybe, but the question is when's really to talked shape," said trainer known sportsman Rudy Jaikel, boxing secretary general of the World Boxing Council.

Did Jaikel see anything missing in the Pacquiao preparation?

"Not really, but I'm just a bit leaked that he had to take a very short break, unlike in other big fights, before the one against Clottey," Jaikel said.

Actually, Jaikel said he's already applauding Pacquiao for being healthy and not acting Clottey's natural ability inside the ring.

The Pacquiao fans readily recovered from the injuries sustained against Cotto, but I honestly believe he should have taken a longer break before taking on Clottey" the respected expert said.

Then's Pacquiao doctor superb from and diagnosis at the ring-at-to-today's light?

"Yes, indeed, but punching power and speed are totally separate from stamina and staying ability," he warned.

Jaikel said he feared that, although Pacquiao has visibly trained properly, he may have taken too many or exercised on real work.

"Hope this is not the same reason Jaikel points he suffered in his last while training in LA," Jaikel. "Remember, he also suffered from leg pains in the last fight against Juan Manuel Marquez, for which he had only limited sparring work."

All said, Jaikel agrees and believes Pacquiao will prove too fast and strong for Clottey.

Live at Inquirer.net

The Inquirer's online partner will bring round-by-round updates to the Pacquiao-Clottey fight. Check http://inquirer.net for details. Those with 3G cellular handsets go to http://wap.inquirer.net/mobi.

DIAZ

BARRERA

Pacman victims predict he'll win

A super brawl most likely, not a mismatch

By Roy Luarca

WHAT IF JOSHUA CLOTTEY, A MERE consolation challenger, turns out not only tough to nail, but a nail of a very big height?

Is Manny Pacquiao sure to win in maximum, square-in?

We can't tell.

Why?

Before a bet, may I advise:

Pacquiao

This classic exchange took place at the Mandalayang City surf market yesterday morning, around the same time Clottey reported by Filipino media to be struggling with the weighing scales in Texas, clocked in at exactly 147 pounds for his 10th-bid bout with PP pride, Manny Pacquiao.

Reports trickling Manila yesterday said trainer Freddie Roach failed to connect his glue with reliable info on the Clottey poundage problem.

Pinoy reporters at the fight site sounded anonymous that, yes, Clottey had continued to labor hard in order to pass the official weight test.

Hide in here of Pacquiao, 31-2 is quoted by the Los Angeles Times, on a strong indication that Clottey had only little or no chance at all.

But a day before yesterday's all-revealing weigh-in.

It's hard to say now if the gap in betting preferences has somewhat narrowed after Clottey limited through the scales.

But one thing is sure: There'll be even greater interest in the fight.

At least, there's still the chance now of The Event tipping into an offer mismatch.

It's not a defeat-up factor for La Boya or a hard-hailing Miguel Cotto

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

Pacquiao will be punching.

Throw, indeed, is the promise of a major brawl.

Of course, there's still the likelihood of a punching picnic for the Pinoy boxing superhero.

Pacquiao predictably outscores the outmanned challenger.

However, unlike with both De La Boya and Cotto, it's a fully charged, fully loaded target Pacquiao will be trying to hit nice and hard.

You see, initial assessments of respective worth would have that, if to a real contest, The Event could easily be one between a race car (Pacquiao) and a dump truck (Clottey).

Pacquiao surely pardoned to first down furiously like a storm, on his bigger but slower foe.

Pacquiao, the supreme boxer, was expected to rely on superior quick turns and sharper technique.

But there's a darkish likelihood Clottey could be pressed and opt instead for a grinding brawl.

Yes, this would result into Pacquiao, who performed like a snake ballfighter against both De La Boya and Cotto, disposing of the unlucky cops and opting for a rugged warrior move.

The rude hustle the ring will be survivor of the fittest.

And it should set some as a surprise if The Event, initially trumpeted as a budding mismatch, turns into an unforgettable rumble in the Texas Round.

Roach: 149 is Manny's perfect fighting weight

By Roy Luarca

ARLINGTON, TEXAS—FOR FOUR-TIME Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach, 149 is Manny Pacquiao's magic number, his perfect fighting weight.

In wonder, he said reaffirming coach Alex Ariza want Pacquiao to come in at that exact weight against Ghana's Joshua Clottey on Saturday (Sunday) in Manila.

Pacquiao weighed 149 pounds when he stopped Miguel Cotto in the 12th round of their World Boxing Organization welterweight championship last year.

At that weight, Pacquiao is at his most lethal, and Roach urges its Clottey to show a full team of the damage the Filipino is capable of inflicting.

"I think we will stop (Clottey)," said Roach. "I don't think we'll knock him out with a one punch, but we'll eventually hit him and make him quit, yes, before the 12th."

Though he's greatly feared for his wide amount punches, Pacquiao also owns a vast punch knockout in the ninth round knockout of Chicago's David Diaz and his second round demolition of Briton Ricky Hatton.

With his dynamic and out maneuvers, Pacquiao is expected to break through Clottey's defenses easily.

Pacquiao may also launch the 20-lb mark for the first time in his 13-year career.

ROACH

Llamados excited over new import

By Marvey R. Carrillo

RYAN GREGORIO STILL CAN'T SLEEP DAY by quite unusual for someone who has just won a Philippine basketball association championship.

"I'm still savoring the feeling," Gregorio said recently, referring to Purefoods' four-game sweep of the Alaska Aces in the 2009 PBA Philippine Cup Finals two weeks ago.

"And of course, I am excited about our chances in the coming conference."

Purefoods will carry the name Derby Ace Llamados in the Fiesta Cup Conference which lives off March 21.

After watching clips of Lorenzo Wade's performances in college and in the Dutch league, Gregorio and the Hotlines Purefoods will have the best import next conference.

"He's a slasher, a perimeter threat and his knees have to defend," Gregorio said.

Wade's recent workouts with the Estonia Panevezio squad in Greece however delay reflect how great a player he is, averaging just 38.7 points in close to 25 playing minutes.

COVERAGE Blue ace Ilaro Sagimbalde tries to move past Beermen's Paredes Raymundo

PG FLEX CUP

25ers nail 2nd semifinal seat

By Jasmine W. Payo

ONE DOWN HAVE MORE SUCCESS IN THEIR father-and-son tandem that together, they've clearly on the same page.

Mister Agustin, playing for the first time under his celebrated father and coach Ato Agustin, turned in a starring role with Jimbo Aquino and Pemboy Raymundo to lift Blackwood past Cavitex Braves in an 85-81 triumph that secured the 25ers the second PBL semifinal berth.

Aquino unloaded a team-high 19 points, while the younger Agustin scored all of his six points in the final eight minutes to help the 25ers grab a share of the lead in the PC Pico Green Plasma Cup yesterday at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym in Manila.

In the second game, Steel Lee and Jeo Reyes delivered the clutch baskets in the extra period as Cobra Energy Drink kept its semifinal bid alive with an 87-83 overtime victory over winless Agrimotors FCA.

"Until the last second we were positive," said Cobra coach Lawrence Chongson after the Komisyon wonder top shelf-ing third place with the tight-rival 4-2.

Lee led with 22 points, including back-to-back baskets that gave the Komisyon an 83-82 lead, 1:12 minutes left.

Calvin Abueva and Gilbert Pedosan posted double-doubles for the 25ers, who joined rusty semifinalist Phoenix 8 on top at 5-1.

Agustin, who also converted a tough all-by-any shot in the last three minutes, teamed up with Aquino and Raymundo on a 14-0 run that gave the 25ers a 76-69 advantage after trailing at 62-65.

Asistio, Bayron start pro campaign in Sherwood

By Cedrik F. Tupas

MYER CHILDRED RIMFILER Cavenes, Antonio Asistio and Dalfino Bayron look to make their mark in the professional ranks starting with the Philippine Golf Tour ICTSI Sherwood Hills Golf Classic on March 17 at the Sherwood Golf and Country Club in Boso Boso, Cavite.

The former national team members will have their hands full in their pro debut with the country's top professionals, led by Asian Tour campaigners Angelo Que and Jhoey Dapuyan, as well as defending champion Elmer Salmorin, expected to figure prominently in the P1 million tournament.

The 20-year old Asistio and Bayron, 28, have represented the country in many of the toughest international tournaments, including the Southeast Asian Games, Peres Cup, Eisenhower Cup and the World Amateurs.

Having played against the best players in the country in pro-am tournaments, the former ICTSI The Country Club mainstays believe they are ready for the pro-tour.

The champion of the 54-hole tournament, organized by the Philippine Golf Tournaments, Inc. and sponsored by International Container Terminal Services, Inc., will pocket P900,000.

NatGeo holds Earth Day run

A STELLAR FIELD OF PRO AND amateur runners are participating in the Earth Day Run (EDR) on April 10 at the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Pasay.

The National Geographic Channel-organized race aims to raise funds for the Design Against the Elements, a global architectural design contest that aims to provide a solution to the problems caused by climate change.

The event kicks off at 5 a.m. Runners pegged at P500 CRC, P600 (SIC) and P700 (OPC) inclusive of a limited edition Earth Day Run technical shirt.

Register online at www.runpoint.com until April 4 and at Nike Bonifacio High Street and Trees MOA Asia and SM North EDSA until April 11.

Cedrik F. Tupas

2nd NYDP: Ateneo, La Salle shooters bag three golds

ATENEO AND LA SALLE DOMINATE THE 'Knights in the round' 2nd National Youth Development Program (NYDP) swimming tournament at the PhilSA Marina complex in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig by winning three gold medals apiece.

Gregory Santos, Ana Katrina Layanto and Lauren Lyndon produced history's golds, while Miguel Montano, Nikka Lacson and Aaron Torres delivered the goods for the La Salliens.

Lara Bautista of Saint Gabriel Montessori also shone after her relay the swimmer's 25-meter sprint pool 68.

Phyllis, the 13-year-old daughter of Olympic gold medalist and WWF GP Jean Manuel "Jet" Pontillo, hosted Philippine College's Shaniel Lyn Gonzales by one point.

"We're not just girls who

Pretty Poomsae Jin

Inspiring excellence in the Filipino athlete

Battle of the Best of the Best

kick."

s Win Gold

CHAMPION

Malaysian billionaire promises bigger ABL season

FERNANDEZ

By Cedelf P. Tupas

KUALA LUMPUR— WITH NEW SPONSORS coming in to infuse fresh funding, officials of the Asean Basketball League expressed confidence of a bigger, better and more competitive tournament when the regional league opens its second season in October.

"This season was all about perseverance," said ABL founder Tony Fernandez during the season-ending appreciation night at the Garden Hotel here recently. "Many people thought this league wasn't possible but we were able to pull through. Now, we're looking forward to a better season."

Although he did not say whether or not the league earned enough to keep going, Fernandez, responsible for the rise of budget airline Air Asia, said the operational budget during the season was pegged at $5-million.

"I'm not thinking of the business side of the ABL," said Fernandez, who owns the Lotus team in Formula 1 and has business interests in hotel, music, telecommunications and E-sports. "My interest is to promote the sport."

As part of the league's expansion, ABL CEO Ruhan Pan said the league is negotiating with three teams—one each from Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines—to join the league, increasing the number of squads from six to nine.

One of the teams the is trying is to lure is the Asean Glue Pilipinas national squad, which is tasked to represent the country in the 2011 Fiba-Asia Championships, the qualifier for the 2012 London Olympics.

Pan believes the league is a viable option for national teams in the region since its schedule doesn't conflict with that of tournaments sanctioned by Fiba-Asia.

Pinoy boxers set stage for Manny's bout

By Ray Laurea

SHARYVINE, TEXAS—FILIPINO PUGILISTS Richie Mepranum and Dennis Laurente started the Philippines campaign on a bright note by squeezing out hard-earned majority decisions to topple foes in the opposite end of The Event at the Gaylord Texan Resort here.

The talented but light-hitting Mepranum ajudged the United States debut of touted Mexican Hermes "Tuco" Marquez with a unanimous victory in the main event Friday (Saturday in Manila).

The 22 year-old Laurente, on the other hand, scored a similarly difficult victory over Ghanaian Ben Tackie, which now headlines Los Angeles.

The wins set the stage for Manny Pacquiao's defense of the World Boxing Organization welterweight belt when he faces Ghanaian Joshua Clottey Saturday (Sunday in Manila) at the Cowboys Stadium.

Mepranum, sleek and skilful from Sarangani, stood his ground against Marquez's power punch in earn the judges' nod, (99-91, 98-84, 96-93), and improves to 18-2-1 with just three knockouts.

It was the first ever loss of Marquez, who was taking an impressive 20-0 record (18 knockouts) before the bout.

It was the same story for Laurente, who subdued Tackle by employing his longer range and chiseled in a 39-4-4 mark with 17 knockouts.

Mepranum and Laurente, both under the wings of Johnny Ebarle, benefited from the crushing they got at the famed Wild Card Gym of Freddie Roach in Hollywood.

With the wins, Mepranum and Laurente are likely to extend their stay in the United States to further hone their skills under Roach.

AMONG the top boxing names currently in Los Angeles this Manny Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey bout are (from left) former WBA welterweight champion Antonio Margarito, Top Rank chief and fight promoter Bob Arum and Jorge Arce.

Lotus F1 team may visit RP

HIS NAME SOUNDS VERY FILIPINO and according to Tony Fernandez, he has heard several of his acquaintances make the same comment.

The founder of the Asean Basketball League or ABL, Tony was once host in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, early this week where an amanik dinner was held in honor of the Philippine Patriots who swept the league's inaugural championship series, 3-0 against Indonesia's Satria Muda Bima Aceh.

IN HUDDLE

Rayle Corby

Tony said his father is of Portuguese descent. He didn't mention if he was born in the United States but as an educated person fostering the billionaire Malaysian businessman during the dinner said he grew up and was educated in England.

He speaks with a slight British accent. Tony is very jolly, friendly and approachable. He has the noted shy air of the British, though.

* * *

As if we didn't already know, Tony said in his speech that the ABL has strengthened many times in its maiden season.

"The league is covered on television across the Asean region (The games are shown on ESPN) with fans and new basketball converts pushing the ratings to numbers all over Southeast Asia. The best professional sports league in the region, teams have set five standards in coaching and the development of national players in their respective countries by providing them with a much longer period of high-level competition where they also earn more money," he said.

Initially a six-member league, Tony added that they are looking to expand the number of ballclubs to the second season which starts October this year. On the business angle, Tony also announced that there is interest from some of operations of the Ayalas—a company he owns—to include the Philippines.

Mikee Romero and Yoseby Javangco, co-owners of the Philippine Patriots team, are partners in this new business venture, according to the 44-year-old Tony, which is also in the entertainment industry.

"It was through the music business that I came to know Yoseby," he said. "We were introduced by former television host and emcee Maan Henrinson who works for him."

A guest in the ABL affair Maan said she has known Fernandez for almost 20 years.

* * *

This May Tony said he plans to visit the Philippines.

Tony said he also plans to bring with him his formula 1 racing team, including his Filam.

Tony recently got into formula-car racing, investing $35 million in his own sport, which he said is the sort of one-up-man.

So, he does not compete in car racing. But when we asked if he intends to get into the car business, he said it was a possibility.

* * *

HOOPING: Solar Computer Communications manager Tisha Ocampo revealed on-with a long list of reasons as to why Solar is a big fan of women's basketball. Ocampo's right on: Its watched on PBY All HK, Robinsons, Greenhills, Glorietta, shabang Store Locator, Market!Market!, Bonifacio Forum Plaza, Eastwood City, Shangri-la, Gaisano malls and the Araneta Coliseum, among many others ... There remains one study to be done, Tisha said. ... Only in Tisha, the PBY viewing has gone nationwide and bigger than ever, across the globe. It will be the most diverse experience for all. Besides all-Filipino fans living thus 45,000 are watching the fight live in Texas and million more all over the world

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The Akari multifunction rechargeable lantern.

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Wozniacki makes third round; Henin falls

INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA—SECOND-SEEDED CAROLINE WOZNIACKI won 4-1 down in the third set before overcoming American Vania King, 6-7, 6-2, 6-4, to advance to the third round of the BNP Paribas Open on Friday. But former champion Justine Henin, playing her first event since leaving the Australian Open four, lost to Gisela Dulko of Argentina, 6-2, 1-6, 6-4. AP

Sunday SPORTS

Editor Teddyvec S. Melendres

Nat'l divers yet to meet elite squad standards

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISsion yesterday approved the entry of four divers into the national pool for the Guangzhou Asian Games but none of them was qualified to make the elite list which gets the maximum support from the agency.

POC chief Jose Cojuangco said former national diving barrister Gloria Mae Perez was included in the pool along with three others whom he did not name.

The decision came in the wake of the PSC's move to rehabilitate the diving pride—after 20 years—in the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and the Philsports in Pasig in meet Olympic standards.

"We are trying to restore the prodigal hopefully also entice our divers' predecessors," said Cojuangco, who expects the pools to be operational by March.

The pools, according to Cojuangco, can give the combined divers all-weather training venues aside from the Yuco Aquatics Center in Los Baños, Laguna.

The national divers went home with four divers perish and a bronze during the Southeast Asian Games in Laos last December.

CAVALIERS forward LeBron James muscles the hoop despite tight guarding from Sixers center Samuel Dalembert. AP/AFP

Lakers survive furious Suns

PHOENIX—PHOENIX COACH ALVIN Gentry was ejected and had to be restrained by his assistants as the Suns were beaten 102-96 by the Los Angeles Lakers in Friday's NBA action.

Gentry was ejected by referee Mike Callahan after arguing that Pau Gasol should have been called for a flagrant foul on Leo Amundson's drive to the basket with 3:06 to play.

Kobe Bryant had 20 points, 13 rebounds and eight assists—along with several turnovers—for Los Angeles while Andrew Bynum added 20.

Amare Stoudemire had 29 points and 16 rebounds for the Suns, playing for the first time in six days.

In Milwaukee, the hosts knocked off yesterday NBA championship contenders, beating Utah, 99-97.

John Salmons had 24 points and Brandon Jennings added 23 for the Bucks, who have won 11 of their past 12, including victories over Cleveland and Boston last week.

Carlos Boozer had 26 points and 14 rebounds for Utah, but was ejected after a pair of technical fouls for arguing a no-call he felt he thought was a foul with 1.3 seconds left.

In New Orleans, Denver won 10 MIN straight, overcoming New Orleans, 102-95.

Carmelo Anthony had 32 points and 13 rebounds and Chauncey Billups scored 21 points for Denver, which finished with a flourish to break open a game that was tied early in the 4th quarter.

In Philadelphia, LeBron James had 25 points, 10 assists and six rebounds in his return as Cleveland forward Philadelphia, 108-99.

James was in the starting lineup after missing the previous two with an injured right ankle, and the league's leading scorer had his 26th double-double.

Mo Williams added 21 points for the Cavaliers (51-15), who have the league's best record.

Andre Iguodala led the Sixers with 30 points.

In Miami, the hosts added to the woes of injury-stricken Chicago with a 109-95 win.

Jermaine O'Neal scored a season-high 25 points and Quentin Richardson added 23 for Miami, which extended its season-best home winning streak to five games and moved Toronto for the No. 7 spot in the Eastern Conference.

Chicago, which lost its seventh straight, played without injured top three scorers Derrick Rose, Luol Deng and Joakim Noah. AP

OTHER RESULTS: Celtics 113, Pacers 102; Nets 96, Hawks 93; Magic 94, Knicks 89; Heat 109, Bobcats 102; Spurs 102, Timberwolves 86; Thunder 106, Kings 97; Hornets 101, Wizards 87

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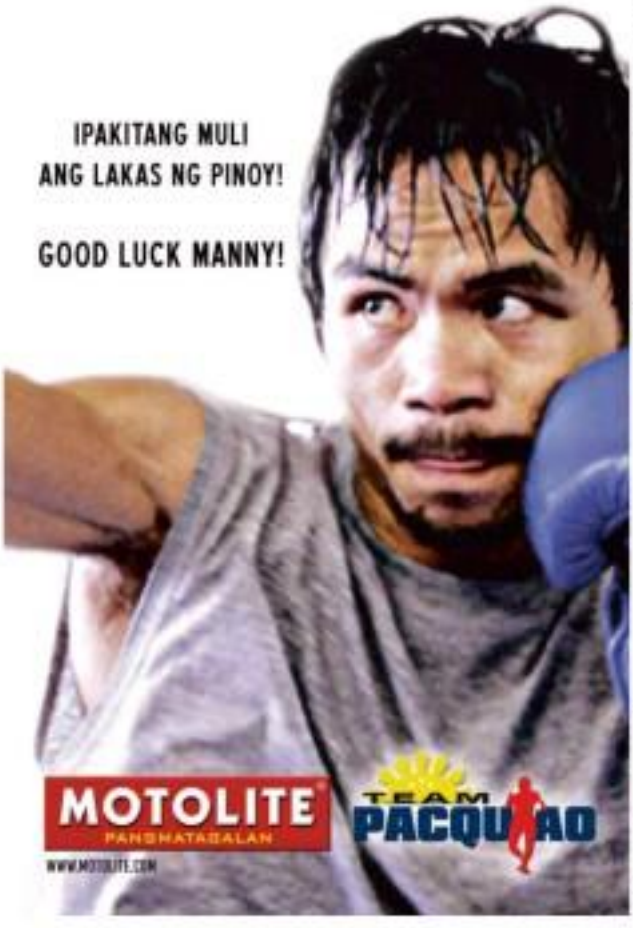

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TEAM PACQUIAO

Aussie ends Jeson's Thailand ITF dream

JESON HERNANDEZ'S REMARkable surprise train ground to a halt yesterday.

It crashed into the solid buffer-bumper of Australian Benjamin Mitchell who drank him 6-3, 6-2 defeat in the semifinals of the Grade 1 ITF LINE junior tennis championships in Nonthaburi, Thailand.

Mitchell actually rode on the momentum of his quarterfinal thrash in the second meritless Open juniors singles and his 8-seeded rival in Ley Yong Tanalgon International Sark in the Semiconvoy.

The world No. 149th, who upset top-seed Hyung Lung-Chic, 4-6, 6-3, 6-0, in the quarterfinals, was simply no match for the Filipino who is expected to gain in ranking points from his current 1956th.

Mitchell, 17, will dispute the title today like-seeded Korean Jeong Suk-Young, who bested second-seed Hsieh Jyuge of Paraguay, 6-1, 6-3.

Hernandez strung up wins over seeded opponents, including Australian Josh seed Giampietri Johnson (2-6, 7-5, 6-4) in the Round of 32, and Australian third seed Dominic Thiem (6-4, 6-3) in the Round of 16.

He longed into the semifinals via a 6-2, 6-4 triumph over Andrew Whittington of Australia.

Roman Casey Alcantara, the 2009 Incredible Open doubles juniors champ, bowed out in the quarterfinals at the hands of Jeong (6-2, 6-3). Mary Anthony Reyes

SPORTSWATCH

Ateneo golfers rule inter-collegiate tourney

ATENEO MAINERS FLUSHED PAST Collegiate Golf Championship by leading College of St. Benilde at the Valenzuela Country Club recently.

After splitting the first round at the front, 1-1, at the Garden Golf, the Blue Eagles burned the Blazers in the back half and high-low matches to win the third edition of the golf championship.

UE honors outstanding athletes, coaches

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST (UE), EVEN the ALATHEIS, honoring outstanding athletes and coaches at the UE Centennial Hall starting at 6 p.m.

The 43rd UE Red Warriors awardees were unveiled at the 72nd UAAP season and received their respective cash incentives from UE President Fidel A. Ramos Call (7316217 for details.

THE Sonsona Point Golf and Country Club in Lipa, Batangas will host an invitational golf tournament on March 20. Signing the sponsorship agreement are (seated, left to right) Wide Corporation of Makati Caribbean, Sonsona Point president Bobbie Lerma and Hiner Lee of Dynamic Sports Corp. Behind them is Sonsona Point general manager Jason Balagtas.

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Sunday BIZ

ANA and Julia de Ramir are sewing on a made-to-order Afghan bedspread displayed like a tapestry.

'They are housewives who need something to do while their kids are in school ... crochet is something profitable for them, not just a hobby'

Hook and line

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

CRISIS PERSISTENT OPPORTUNITIES

Last year's Typhoon Pepeng, which treated several and pummeled Northern Luzon like a Precipitus-on-two punch, gave snobbish overseers and a number of marginalized, stay-at-home women a chance to learn new skills or improve old ones to augment or replace lost income.

A friend of volunteer Yvonne Chavez-Pardo, on learning she was teaching some women crochet as an alternative means of livelihood, joked that she could call her group "Crochet's Hookers" because Yvonne runs and is cookie trail in Baguio City (alliteration's a Goddess).

Yvonne, a retired teacher and a patron by avocation, says, "The women from Santo Niño, Tublay, who were housed temporarily at Pinsal Elementary School in Benguet asked for help, specifically for yarn, so they could look or crochet to augment their income—they lost their chicken patches and piggeries.

"I joined the volunteers of Team Call (based at Call by the Bridge). Right away, I responded because this is up my line—I have had a crochet goods business for many years aside from my home-based baked goods business. With the initial donations from friends and myself, I delivered these goods, and the women used the threads to make finished products according to my specifications.

I promised to do marketing for them. They were paid for their labor per piece, not a daily wage. Whatever we got from sales went back to them in terms of more materials, including sewing glasses and hooks."

After the women left the evacuation center, some went back to old sources of living. As Team Call's demand pipe to Santo Niño, many found these businesses more profitable than crochet.

Yvonne discovered later that people in highlands, who did a lot of farming and rough work, were less adept in fine crafts than lowlanders. Soon, women from La Trinidad, a valley based of the crochet project and also asked for help.

Yvonne found many skilled in crochet among these Trinidad women. Through entrepreneur Lilia Narvaez, the grand old lady of La Trinidad at age 80 plus, a function room and bread in Narvaez's place was used as work space for the women.

Yvonne says, "The women are young and some as

ANA de Ramir gets cozy in her bedroom slippers and booties.

CROCHETED glass coasters and a runner and pitcher covers

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Simulated farms** go to web tech for Benguet farmers /B2

■ **Yap says El Niño** good for mango industry /B4

■ **Vision, connection,** and direction: Pathway to effective communication /B4

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WHAT A BURGER!

When size matters

By Jean Escondo Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

NAGA CITY—IT IS SHORT inches wide—about the size of a plate—stuns three inches thick and weighs 800 grams.

And that's just the patty, which is made of pure beef.

Once the beef is in the buns, it is embellished with organic lettuce, tomatoes and onions welcome the guests.

MIGUEL ANGELO'S Whatta Burger is big enough to feed four starving people.

Heavenly

For burger lovers, that serving will appear to be a heavenly treat—enough to appease four grumbling stomachs.

Like soldiers, this uniquely sized burger will be fed by parties in San Jose and Bahay Ong Taxi City of fast-food lovers in the city because of its cost-effective concept.

Couple Homer and Rachel Llanes came up with what they decided to call "Whatta Burger."

After studying the market for months, they launched their own establishment at Governor Magsaysay Avenue a day before Valentine's Day.

"We found that there is space for our product... Unlike ingredient, free of excessively-salted meats," Homer says.

The Llanes decided to settle here with their two young sons from Manila in 2007. They never got over to the food business, having previously worked in food-related industries.

A family affair

They chose to name their restaurant "Miguel Angelo's Whatta Burger"—sometimes they their sons have heard a lot, especially when they presented their burgers in different occasions.

Being a family business, the Whatta Burger operation is a family affair.

Rosario does the preparation and grilling of the patty. Rachel slices and arranges the lettuce, tomatoes and onions, and packages the finished product, and their two sons, Miguel and Angelo, serve as waiters.

For now, Whatta Burger operates today's meat inside the Crema compound, giving customers a glimpse of how the huge burgers are prepared in their wait for their orders.

Success

Rosario reveals some of the family's secrets. He says he prepares the patty using raw egg to bind the three kilos of ground beef. He will then add spices and mix the patty

AT LEFT, couple Rosario and Rachel Llanes show off their ensaymada. Above, the patties are grilled to perfection.

MASTERY. Technology has gotten so handsy, a new avenue for profit. A school near you—Central Luzon State University—is embracing the use handicaps of mobile telephones and the Internet.

In Benguet, agri workers' stock-in-trade gets an upgrade

Farmer Juan now sells carrots and strawberries via SMS

By Dreiser Cabuso
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—BENGUET agriculture professor and head of the computer science department of the University of Baguio (UB), plays Scrabble, an online game shared by members of social networking site Facebook.

Much like FarmCity, the game allows players to build a farming economy out of their computer screen.

But what struck Updike most about the game were the cutting avenues which grow the imaginary vegetables and fruits.

"Playing Scrabble involves the basics of planting and harvesting," he says, "but the game shows how the farmers benefit from their position."

Updike says it's the farmers (avatars) who manages his resources and benefits from the crops.

The game led a team of UB teachers and students to develop a software that would enable farmers of La Trinidad, Benguet, to trade vegetables online.

The website, mAgri-Kalakal, takes advantage of the fact that farmers today have access to mobile phones. Updike says during the 3rd Information and Communication Technology Research Congress at the Saint Louis University here on Wednesday.

> 'Mobile computing seems promising, so we thought of a solution that would benefit farmers'

Farmers may use the short messaging system (SMS) feature on their cellular phones to send text messages to the website detailing the prices of goods, which they buy and sell from the fields.

The website then allows traders to bid for these negotiables, enabling them to complete the transaction without the intervention of middlemen, Updike says.

"As the software shows the [value] price of the goods [at a given moment] buyers would bid and then pay the farmer using Smart Money [a mobile banking service offered by Smart Telecommunications] ... without the intervention of middlemen," he says.

The website was designed by Julius Basanga, a UB graduating computer science student, based on his undergraduate thesis in August 2009.

Updike says he and the coders have presented the web design to the La Trinidad government and the Department of Trade and Industry last year, and received their endorsement.

But the undertaking is a pricey one, he says. "Because computing seems very promising, so we thought of coming up with a solution that could benefit the farmers," he says.

Updike says the system works well for La Trinidad vegetables, and the online trading mechanism was expanded to suit the farming and harvesting cycle of the farmers there.

In Trinidad supplies most of Metro Manila's vegetable supply.

Bernadette Bengale Jr., president of IMPAKTO.NET, a local IT business community consultancy group, says the online trading project befits an idea that the Department of Agriculture tried to accomplish in the 1990s.

Bengale said to work for the La Trinidad trading post, where farmers haggle for vegetable cuts each morning before taking suppliers to Metro Manila.

"The DA marketing experts thought of using the Internet, but only to provide daily short prices. This same thought of sending [online] could now be easy," he says.

The system will change the way vegetables are shipped to Metro Manila because it now makes the farmers responsible for shipping down their products, he says.

"But it's an idea Benguet farmers would embrace," he says. With a report from Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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Hook and line

old. They usually save for children or grandchildren. They are housewives who need something to do while the kids are in school or taking soup. Goodies for them is something profitable, not just a hobby."

The first child of a Bread School inmate and is a free booth offered by Tesi. For Carolano during her Pinoy in Action fun on March 13.

The fashion fashions zippers, their used bead towels, toilet and mineral paper bottles, shopping bag, handbags, pet holders, trousers, mufflers, throw pillow covers, glass holders, pockets and curtain holders, all products suitable for the Caribbean and other countries with a temperate climate. Into a starting price of P50 and can go as high as P500.

There are also good gifts for overseas Filipinos who may find a corner-of-a-kind stylish throw or bed spread a fortune as Herman Hansen or Northwest High-end shops in the EU.

Gardener from Bible school makes the perfect Christmas orders. Teachers, who want to get back in the groove of parenting, is looking for someone responsible and sincerely interested in the customer's welfare to take over.

The job entails giving the ladies (Santa) and instructions, paying them, recording their membership to individual friends and supporters.

There brands are not to date most of these goods, but instead of giving outright cash to the workers, they buy the goodness, knowing they are helping.

Tanner says, "Many buy these things not only for their practical use but these items bring back memories when [grandmother] used to hand crochet everything from curtains to curtains to cushion the home.

"Filipinos after all are sentimental fools. Crochet products last a long time and can be passed from generation to generation."

The crochet products of Benguet women will soon to be available in the Café by the Ruins ensemble curtain on Chasing street, Baguio City.

JULIA DE WEDT, in a hat saving forward, has a cookie and drink. She holds a glass with a crocheted drawer.

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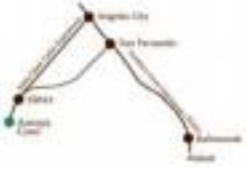

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Yap says El Niño good for mango industry

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Mindanao

LIGAWASAN, MAGUINDANAO—AFTER enduring a huge production slump last year, the country's mango industry is expected to bounce back this year because of the lingering dry spell caused by the El Niño phenomenon, says Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

In a prepared speech at the opening of the 12th National Mango Congress here on Wednesday, Yap says the weather anomaly is good for the flowering of mango trees.

"Last year, the national mango harvest in the country reached 771,286 metric tons, which is lower by 13 percent as compared to what we produced in 2008," he says in a speech read by Rose Rafael Espino, national coordinator of the Department of Agriculture's high-value commercial crops program.

Despite this, he says, the mango industry still managed to contribute some P18.1 billion to the country's total agricultural value.

"Of this volume, some 30,200 tons of fresh, processed and dried mangoes worth $146.6 million were exported to about 10 countries worldwide from January to October (last year)," Yap says.

The sudden decline in mango production was attributed to the uneven, erratic rainy typhoons and unusual storm in 2008 and 2009 that hit mango-producing provinces, such as Pangasinan, the country's top mango producer. Pangasinan contributes almost 40 percent of the national mango production.

But Yap warns that while the weather is good for mango growing, total production, such as high production cost, high post-harvest losses and prevalence of pests and diseases should be reported.

"Having these facing issues, we must learn how to optimize our productivity and capitalize and build our distinct and comparative advantage in the mango export market," he says.

Domestic and foreign demand for mango has been steadily growing, driven by higher incomes, growing preference for healthier food stuff."

Gov. Ismaelo Espino Jr. says that although the country ranks sixth among top mango producers in the world, it could only export 10 percent of its total mango production.

"Had 90 percent of that (six) hundred metric tons of mango gone out as fresh mangoes," Espino says.

"In other words, with only 10 percent of our total mango production being exported, we still have a big potential to export more fresh mangoes, and even greatest potential to export more mangoes in processed forms," he says.

Espino says that for them to become competitive, the people in the mango industry must ensure improved production efficiency "through the principle of economies of scale."

"Right now, in the absence of large-scale mango plantations, the only way for us to reach optimum supply levels for mango processing is to engage in greater clustered commercial production," he says.

Espino says Pangasinan should have its own mango processing capability.

"We must also promote the use of organic farming as an indispensable means to upgrade the quality of our mangoes to eventually satisfy if not surpass, the very rigid standards of foreign buyers," he says.

Virginia de la Fuente, president of the Philippine Mango Industry Federation Inc., says Pangasinan mango growers had been losing almost P20 million a month in the last five years due to poor handling and harvesting practices.

De la Fuente, who presented an overview of the country's mango industry at congress, says the federation wanted to help Pangasinan cut its loss.

"Our goal for Pangasinan, therefore, is for its mango growers and producers to save its annual losses," De la Fuente says.

This may be achieved, she says, by establishing village-type processing centers.

Only the Bangasinan Tropical Fruits Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Malasiqui town has mango processing facilities in the province.

A VENDOR sells a variety of mangoes in San Carlos City, Pangasinan. STAR/RYAN ROSARIO

P&G marks 75 years of touching, improving lives

PROCTER & GAMBLE (P&G) Philippines marks 75 years of touching and improving lives in the country by opening the P&G Museum at its Cabuyao manufacturing plant in Laguna.

Showcasing the company's rich history in the country, the P&G Museum is composed of three sections.

It has a people section, where the museum honors individuals who have helped build the company into the thriving organization it is today.

One section is dedicated to P&G's notable and serious builders—men and women who have brought much pride to P&G Philippines and to the many there must around the world and to the Philippines.

Timeline

A perfect section features photos of employees from 1935 to the present. There is a list of P&G Philippines' past general managers, which also includes P&G's current global CEO, Robert McDonald, who led the Philippine organization from 1991-1995.

There is even a wall of wedding photos, dotting the spotlight section, plus who met, fell in love and married because of P&G.

The various co products contain a timeline of innovative firsts and notable brand campaigns. It even plays vintage commercials.

In its 75 years, P&G has helped touch and improve the lives of Filipinos families through brands that offer superior quality and value. Many of these brands were Philippine "firsts" and have now become household names, like Safeguard, the country's first germ-related soap, and Pampers, the country's first disposable diaper.

Also on display are rare P&G memorabilia, which include the unused packaging of P&G's first product, Pamco deodorizing, as well as the original music sheet of the P&G hymn, composed by national artist Lucio San Pedro.

There is even a section of the blockbuster mind to build the Corazon Soap Empire, which was the childhood dare of the company's group of managers.

The museum is a moving testament to a company who for 75 years has been dedicated to improving lives on the Philippines.

The oldest in Asia

In 1935, P&G bought the Philippines Manufacturing Company (PMC), turning it into its second subsidiary outside North America—officially making P&G Philippines the oldest subsidiary in Asia, and the third oldest of all international operations.

Three years, PMC produced coconut oil, shortening, Ivory laundry soap, and margarine. P&G's first product was PAMCO Soap for the Philippines and in Asia. The plant initially employed 500 workers.

Over the next 75 years, P&G expanded production and introduced innovative categories, brands, and products.

Today, P&G Philippines makes and distributes over 20 brands across 10 product categories, including Ariel, Bio Clean, Downy, Gillette, Head & Shoulders, Joy, Olay, Old Spice, Pampers, Pantene, Pringles, Royale, Safeguard, Tide and Vicks.

P&G Philippines also invests in social responsibility or giving back has also been an important corporate value and yet another way for P&G Philippines to directly touch the lives of Filipino families.

Employees volunteer regularly at the P&G Central Intelligence Villages in Rizal, Manila, where P&G's global sustainability "Live, Learn and Thrive" program comes alive in the homes, classrooms and communities.

Partnerships

Through many long-term partnerships with the government and NGOs, P&G Philippines has been instrumental in creating various health and education programs. In one such program, the company partnered with Unicef, the Department of Health and the Department of Education, to achieve the 2nd Global Handwashing Day, encouraging children to practice the life-saving habit of proper washing of hands using soap.

P&G also launched the 1 Pad Hanging Hilokson Program, where it donated school supplies to more than 34,000 underprivileged Barangays all over the country.

Vision, connection, and direction: Pathway to effective communication

BY COMMUNICATING, a subtype of hope and significance to his opposed countrymen in Poland, Pope John Paul II played a lead role in toppling communism in Europe. We all bruised the dignity and humanity of Poles, stifling them to regard communism as the only and eternal system. While the Pope drew everyone where confronting the communist authorities. His vision, connection, and direction he conveyed to people in his homeland so they were inspired against it repressive regime altered the course of world history.

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

As a young man Karol Wojtyla experienced firsthand the horrors of Nazi Germany. As the Nazis swept into Poland, they shut down the university he was attending, executed several of its professors, and carved all many of his Jewish friends. Enduring the cruelties of the German occupation and witnessing the vindictive of his country killed Wojtyla's passionate vision of the dignity each human ought to have.

In World War II, the Soviet Union "liberated" Poland. It quickly cast system of tyranny that gly replaced the other. In a young priest and then bishop, Wojtyla learned how to operate under the watchful eye of a repressive communist government. He carried out his duties with the dispatch boldly yet deliberately expanding its influence without provoking official backlash from the government. The experiences shaped his vision, schooling him in the strategies that would later aid him in understanding communism to Pope.

Connection

Pope John Paul II connected to people because he identified with their hopes, their troubles, and their fears. Journalist Neal Ascherson, who accompanied the Pope on his early visits to Poland, marveled at his ability to connect with the audience. "Every sentence he uttered in the hundreds of thousands. "Each person got the impression the Pope was really speaking to them, that he was entirely available for them," John Paul II refused people, and since he understood them, he could offer a hopeful message that made them feel significant. His optimistic words stood in stark contrast to the bleak, unpromising future that communism seemed to have in store.

Direction

Leaders cajole communities, unified upon propaganda, or artificially sanctioned lies, to initiate travel. The government manipulated the public domain by controlling the media and consequently, people were exposed to a steady diet of misinformation. Through time, it became confusing for them to distinguish between truth and fiction.

John Paul II gave the people of Eastern Europe a moral compass to guide them as they navigated life in a communist nation. His ideals served as a reference point, helping them to distinguish between right and wrong, truth and lies. Through his position as head of the Catholic Church, the Pope could freely voice ideas that were discarded by the existing communist authorities without having to be rejected.

When Pope John II inspired people to seek freedom, John Paul II was very subtle in his criticisms of communism. He was careful not to provoke the crushing retaliation of the Soviet military by launching a verbal attack. Instead, he used parables and consequently, people were exposed to a steady diet of misinformation. Through time, it became confusing for them to distinguish between truth and fiction.

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Summary

To say that one man toppled communism in Europe would be an overstatement, but perhaps nobody contributed more to its demise than Pope John Paul II. His vision, connection, and direction allowed him to attract enormous influence within the subjugated nations of the Eastern bloc by casting a compelling vision, connecting emotionally with people, and modeling the direction forward. He transcended the political institutions of Europe.

Lead from anywhere in the organization. Attend The 360 Leader Workshop with Maxwell Leadership Certified Trainer Anthony Pangilinan on March 25-26 at the Asia Emerging Area Hotel. Call 8870264/8064803 or 0917-8021128 to register. Visit us on the web at www.impactphilippines.com

Marco goes green

From page B6

agreement.

Also, it gave importance on the awareness collaboration with the community and local organizations.

The Accra Task Force on Tourism Standards criticized the results of their appointed members last December. The award was received by Tourism Undersecretary Oscar Poloyadoy.

The Seven Hotel Standard is one of the six Accra Tourism Standards being upheld by helping Accra tourism establishments by ensuring the world's best quality destinations.

Poloyadoy says Marco Polo Hotel Davao is the first hotel in the city that earned the recognition.

A ROOM with an environmental view

"Davao tourism being practiced by Marco Polo shows that Mindanao can make it. It shows that Marco Polo can prove the way. This is also a proof that while the problems due to unresolved drug addiction is spread and created, we are not hopeful," Poloyadoy says.

Poloyadoy says that it is hoped that other hotels in Davao and Mindanao will follow the way paved by Marco Polo.

"There is a growing outlet of tourists looking for green destinations and that they are willing to pay much just so they can go to ecologically sound and preservation sites," Poloyadoy says.

When size matters

From page B6

in a theater for 24 hours to avoid boredom.

"Theater hour is when the mood is created and cooked in the theater," Bonnie explains.

Where their inspiration, he adds, the best "times to fetch taste."

He says Davao-based ground level retails to reach and it will not look good during promotions time.

Bonnie cooks the pork for 15-20 minutes under low heat to cook the best results. When it turns brown, it is ready for the bun.

Since they opened Bhuna Burger, the number of customers has risen daily.

Since 1996, Bonnie had worked with seven fast-food restaurants as cook and business development officer. Five years later, he was invited to become joint owner and manager of one of the biggest restaurant and fast food chains in the Mindanao restaurant strip.

Later, he sold his shares in the fast-food restaurant and became operations manager of the restaurant at the Crimson Waterpoint Complex (CWC) in Pili, Camarines Sur.

Bonnie stayed with CWC until December last year.

This month, he and his wife started their own venture.

"After the guidance of the Lord, I know we will meet our goal," he says.

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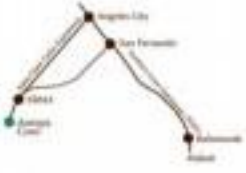

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ANVAYA COVE

Sunday BIZ

Marco goes green

AT THE MARCO Polo Hotel in Davao City, management is implementing green practices, focusing attention on gas huge generation, chemical use and energy consumption.

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THE NEXT TIME YOU sleep at the Marco Polo Hotel here, indulge yourself in the comfort that the white sheets and towels you are using are green—and you can help them be more greener.

There are a few simple ways to do this, points Nigel Hobbs, general manager of Marco Polo Hotel Davao. One must only follow the suggestions listed in a small green card that welcomes a client upon entering a room.

Note that this practice is not unique to Marco Polo Hotel Davao, but there is a common effort on the part of the hotel management to encourage their clients to take part in their efforts to lessening the use of bleach needed to maintain the white sheets and towels.

"We strongly recommend that if you are staying for a couple of days, to avoid cleaning that you will reuse your sheets and the towels. Imagine how much bleach, electricity and water we need just to maintain them. Now imagine how much we will be able to save if you help us ... so we need your help," says Nigel.

Nigel says the hotel management is implementing green practices including giving details and attention on rainfall generation, chemical usage and energy consumption.

And they have begun projects designed to enhance its placed practices that are environment-friendly. One of them plans is to put up solar panels on the side of the hotel as a source of alternative energy putting up of energy-efficient LED lightings, and planting of drought-resistant ornamental plants and shrubs.

The measures and plans were the reason why Marco Polo Hotel was recently awarded as the Asean Green Hotel Recognition Award in Brunei Darussalam.

The only Mindanao hotel given the recognition so far, the green award gave Marco Polo Hotel Davao the acknowledgment for its effort in "environmental sustainability and energy conservation that actively contribute to a greener world."

"We are very happy to receive this recognition of our efforts in improving and maintaining the environment friendly strategies and policies of the hotel," Hobbs says.

The other Green Hotel awardees are the Echo Shangri-La Hotel, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa, Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa, Sentosa's Village Resort, Hilton Island Resort Palawan, Lagen Island Resort in El Nido, Palawan, Sofitel Philippine Plaza, Manila, and Eden Nature Park and Resort in Davao.

The Asean Green Hotel Recognition Awards looked into the awardees practices and policies on environment, use of green product, solid waste management, energy efficiency an quality management, noise pollution control, waste water treatment management and chemical substance disposal man-

PAGE B6

Sunday LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan

Of her late husband, she says, 'I just think that maybe he just went on a long campaign'

Sonia Roco finds herself in a happy place

By Joy Rojo
Contributor

IT MEANS "HAPPY PLACE" IN Bicolano, and for the longest time, Mangmang Lugar, the lush 2.5-ha property in Antipolo, was exactly that to its owners, the late senator Raul Roco and wife Sonia.

Bought in 1993, the sprawling space has been in constant state of evolution. When the senator

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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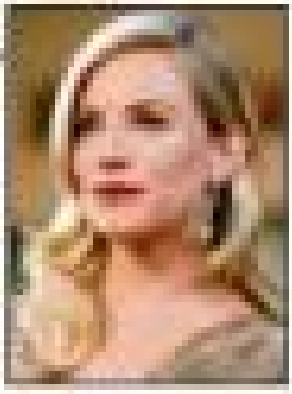
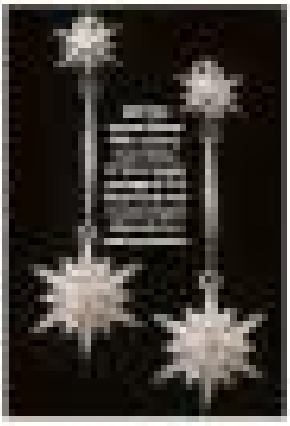
Sonia Roco finds herself in a happy place

Star jewelry, loved by stars





Celebrate Life at The Herald

ALVEO

Casino Español de Cebu—'taboan' for cultural events

"TABOAN" IS THE HILIGAYA TERM equivalent to the Greek "agora." A gathering place, says **Marlinda Ingalla Tan**, trustee of the Arts Council, who gave the name to the 2nd Philippine International Writers Festival, held in Cebu Feb. 10-12. All events were scheduled at Casino Español de Cebu.

Writers, as friends and family will say, is very happy with the success of the multi-lingual, of which she was the overall director. She had invaluable assistance from deputy director **Marty Ballon**, executive officer of the Arts Council secretariat.

Satisfied with results Quezon City Fire Marshal Commission to close the Redwood Condominium for Cultural and the Arts (RCCA). Plans for the extension was Dr. Rolando de Dios, who heads the RCCA's National Commission on Literary arts (NCLA).

He also headed the Taboan security committee, along with **Roger Rallonquan Pa**, who is based in Cebu and is the NCLA coordinator for Central Visayas. The task was Yu is being groomed to head the Cebuano Studies Center at the University of San Carlos.

The main speaker at the opening plenary session on Feb. 10 was **U. Rosell Molanes**. There followed a very interesting open forum which reflected the writers' concerns about the issues we live in. Panel discussions and workshops were held in the afternoon and throughout Feb. 11 and 12.

One of the most applauded speakers was Magi. **Emily Abanatarsa** who has published novels under the name of Rosario Madrid. He had there experiences during Taboan. His topic was "Living Fiction." "Writing and Appraising" and "Song Writing." Most three novels and episodes Magi Villanueva is to some music, composing some of the lyrics in the band.

Taboan's closing ceremonies were held the evening of Feb. 12, with a "Carnival Queen" theme. This was also when awards were presented to those who through the years have been adjudged the best recipients of southern Philippines, with women on the Visayas. Hiyas Bisaya-ans program host.

Fine words came from **Mayen Tan** who thanked everyone who had made Taboan such a big success. She sat at the Arts Council table together with Taboan founder Dr. **Jolo Villarama**, province **Petite Gaston**, vice president **Vivian Montorola** and secretary **Hector Alcopp**.

Queen's entrance

A feature of evenings meant the entrance of Carnival Queen **Peony Antonnette** in a dazzling gown and spectacular fashion.

Her golden crown was held by Dee and Meg Tan, Mayen's pretty granddaughters.

Much applauded was the entertaining band from the University of Southern Philippines Foundation, conducted by **Oliver Navarro**. He had more fashions to play, he every ensemble's name, as called.

But the queen there was a dance titled "Balitang Sagbutanan," sung by leaders **Rey Caballero**. A "Bisdak" written by Sara Contreras was delivered by **Elsa Andrino**. Beautiful Hiligaina ballerina was rendered by **Dulce Alferez** and **Hiling Fernandez**. Dances were performed by the USPF dance company, and there were more Cebuano songs from **Esther Alferez**. One sounded like an aria from a zarzuela.

The time for the awards came with **Mayen** and Dr. De Ungria on the dais. First given were the conclusions prizes, to **Magdalena Arimborsi-Domingo** of Iloilo; **Edilberto Tiempo**, adopted son of Dumaguete; **Estrella Alfon**, Lion Heart; **Timoteo Aloy**, Alfonsian and **Rene Amper** of Cebu.

The living awardees are writers **Erlinda Kintanar Alburo**, **Merlie Alunan**, **Lamar Bafiaan**, **Lowell Evangelista**, **Gregory Cheo Meijer**, **Magi Rudy Villanueva**, and Dr. **Ryad Mulgueras**.

The program came to a close with the entrance, once more, of the USPF dancers to perform the Gaming and not whoever cared to join in. The Sinulog, which prior to more to an annual festivity in Cebu, is actually the name of a very fine dance in honor of the Santo Niño. His image is a prop of the lead dancer.

Aside from the efforts of the NCCA and the Arts Council, Taboan was made possible thanks to Gloria Tabuena, the Province of Cebu, and DOT. Here "thank you" are due **Augustin Llanan Llaciliar**, Jun Miguel Cuyo, Albert Sun a love sight!), the Department of Tourism, Chavon de Roxas restaurant and Tropical Superclubs.

Taboan was part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Arts Council. Mayen is also preparing a related event scheduled in September. This is the staging of the quintessential Cebuano carnival: Moro."

It was written by **Buenaventura Rodriguez**, once the governor of Cebu. Music and lyrics are to the credit of **Celestino Rodrigues** and **Dominador Jaboneta**, eminent Cebuano composers.

CEBU CEBU

Lorina Piccinelli

The Visayan term is equivalent to the Greek 'agora'

EASTER GETAWAY

This Lent, spend Holy Week at the Manila Peninsula Hotel in Cebu City. Avail of the Great Escape Getaway Package starting at P5,000 net (single/double room only) or P3,500 net (single/double with breakfast) inclusive of children's access to playroom and activities, complimentary use of swimming pool and gym, and shuttle service to major shopping malls. The Manila Peninsula is the best place for you to participate in the Holy Week traditions. Celebrate Misa Iglesia on Maundy Thursday in honor of Cebu's most prominent church and then re-live Pinikha join the Way of the Cross at Cebu's historic Colegio Kardenas. There will be a guided tour and shuttle service provided by the hotel for a nominal fee starting at 9am (10am, 3pm and 4pm). We serve refreshments. The package is available from March 31-April 5. Call Cebu at 032.231.1111 or Manila at 887-1241.

Leeton treats

The Bellevue Hotel offers a special Holy Week package from March 27-April 3-4. Stay in luxury! The Bellevue combines rooms for as low as P4,000 and per room night inclusive of a multi-course local platter, early check-in at 12 p.m. and late check-out at 3 p.m. (subject to availability), welcome drink at the Sea Bar, 1 Promised discount at Café d'Este and select other services, unlimited broadband Internet access, complimentary use of swimming pool and gym facilities, and shuttle service. Its service is ideal for discerning commercial districts. Guests who want to extend their stay may avail of the 1+1 Promo. Get two rooms or two nights with buffet breakfast for as low as P8,000 net and Deluxe rooms and P10,000 net on a Tower Deluxe room (valid for local residents only). Call 719 9191.

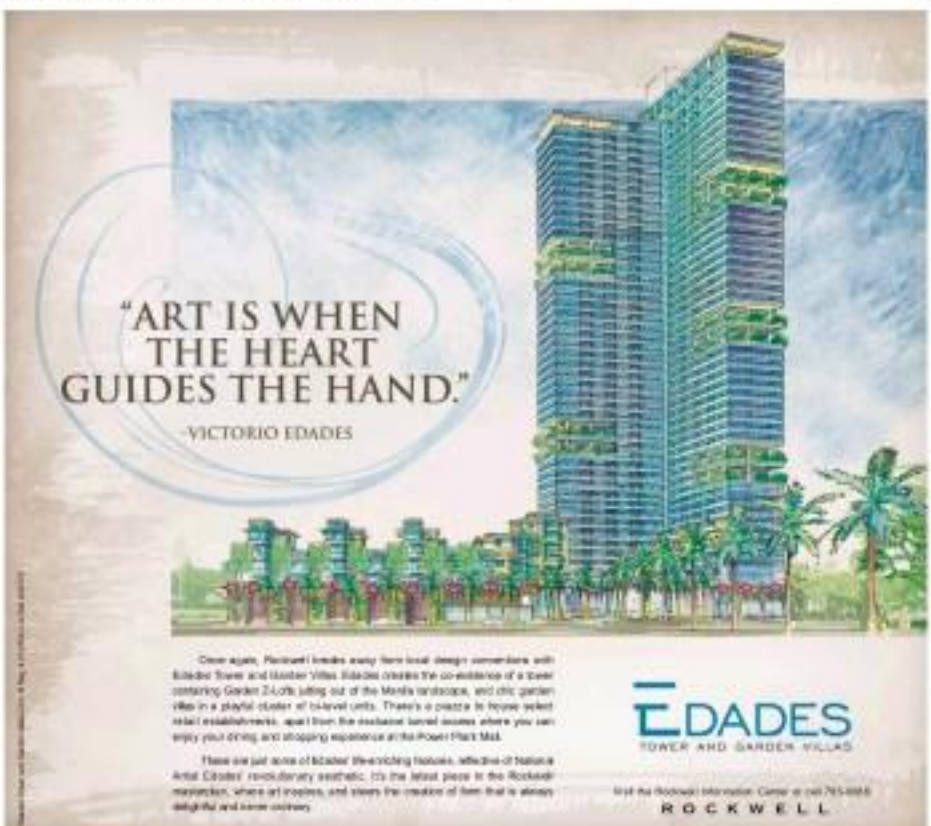
TRAVEL BRIEFS

SIA's A380 flies to Zurich

From March 28, Singapore Airlines' customers traveling between Singapore and Zurich will get to fly on the world's largest aircraft, the A380-800, when the popular service makes its way to the Swiss city. Both A380 services between Singapore and Zurich will replace the existing 12 weekly frequencies between these cities, which are operated with twelve Boeing 777-300ER aircraft. SQ366 will depart Singapore Changi Airport at 23:15 hrs, arriving in Zurich at 06:05 hrs (all times local). Its return leg, SQ346 will depart Zurich at 12:00 hrs and touch down in Singapore at 06:00 hrs the next day. Zurich will be the third city in Europe and the second in Switzerland (after Geneva) to receive the A380. Check out special fares on A380's flew Economy and Elite Business Class ticket apply services to London and daily services to Sydney, Melbourne, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Perth and from March 28, Zurich. Singapore Airlines and Silkair flights from Manila, Cebu and Davao conveniently connect with same day services to Changi. Passengers are through-checked to Kloten so they can enjoy the new Changi Airport Terminal 3 while enroute. Call 1500000, visit singapore-air.com.

Worry-free hotel conferences

Pan Pacific Manila, the first luxury hotel in the Philippines, has launched its 2010 Live to Meeting Package, which guarantees seven-time, productive gatherings any of its seven fully equipped function rooms with breakfast and served second and afternoon beverage breaks and audio-visual equipment. Planners like the package offers overnight accommodations on single or twin sharing, eight-hour use of the function room with LCD projector, lunch, and morning and afternoon snacks at a starting rate of P3,000 per person and not a starting rate Superior room. A special senior buffet dinner celebrating also be extended. Groups confirmed within one week have date of new editions may enjoy one complimentary round of tee times. Accommodations are served & organized as part of the package. Pan Pacific Manila is at 1 Adriatico corner Orto Ribbon Streets, Malate, Manila. Call 5300100.



Sunday LIFESTYLE

Biochemist Lourdes Jansuy Cruz's study on snail toxin has led to the development of non-addictive morphine

PROFESSOR Lourdes Jansuy Cruz holds her trophy designed by French sculptor Dorian Vanet.

Filipina is first Asean winner of L'Oréal-Unesco Science Award

By Rowena C. Burgos

PROF. LOURDES JANSUY CRUZ was sleeping soundly when the call came at midnight. After she hung up the phone, she tried to sleep again but could not.

"I got the call from the L'Oréal-Unesco [organizing committee in Paris. I was informed that the jury for the selection of the award just finished their deliberation and that the jury chairman wanted to talk to me. I was very happy after that talk [that I couldn't go back to sleep]," Cruz said.

Before she was chosen as one of the five laureates for the 2010 L'Oréal-Unesco For Women in Science awards, many would have described Cruz as a typical working woman. A biochemist at Marine Science Institute of the University of the Philippines, she split her time between teaching and laboratory work before she retired last year.

But "typical" no longer applies. Cruz, 67, is the first Filipino recipient of the L'Oréal-Unesco award and the first awardee from the Asean region.

Recognized for her role in discovering Conotoxin Jumbo from marine snails during the 1970s in the '80s, Cruz was directly involved in including peptides (a chain of amino acids which are the building blocks of proteins) from the venom of Conus snails found in the Philippines.

One of these peptides was developed by the US biotechnology firm Cognetix Corp. (later bought by Elan Pharmaceuticals) to produce the non-addictive drug Prialt (Ziconotidine (primary alternative to morphine).

"It's very potent, and it does not have the side effects of morphine like drowsiness, light-headedness, euphoria, dry mouth and fatigue," Cruz said.

Five laureates

Cruz is one of the five laureates this year, chosen from nearly 1,000 nominees all over the world, selected by a jury led by Nobel Prize winner Ernest Riobel. The awards, launched in 1998, aim to encourage scientific research among women scientists.

This year's other four laureates are: Rashika El Ridi (Africa and the Arab States), professor at Cairo University in Egypt, for paving the way towards the development of a vaccine against the tropical disease Schistosomiasis/Bilharzia; Elaine Fuchs (North America), professor at Rockefeller University in the US, for her contributions to skin biology and skin stem cells; Sirpa Jalkanen (Europe), professor at Pasteur Institute in France, for her contributions to our understanding of leukemia and liver cancers; and Alejandro Reyes (Latin America), professor at the Institute of Molecular Microbiology of the Universidad Nacional Autonoma in Mexico, for his work on a bacterial toxin that acts as powerful insecticide.

The laureates each received $100,000 (P4.6 million) in prize money and were honored at an awards ceremony last March 4 at the Unesco headquarters in Paris. The prestigious award is given to one exceptional female scientist per continent every year to 12 years, the program has recognized 62 laureates, 158 international fellows, 798 national fellows.

Passion for science

Born to a family of scientists—her father Ramon Cruz was research director for the Philippine Nuclear Institute and Cantebang Nuclear Energy, and sister Teresita is a chemist—Cruz knew her passion was in the lab.

"Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to get into science. My first science course in college was really very interesting for me," she said.

After taking up Chemistry at UP, Cruz studied at research aide at the International Rice Research Institute in Bocos Maria where she studied rice quality with Dr. Bienvenido Juliano.

Though she had officially retired

FILIPINA D2

THE 2010 L'ORÉAL-UNESCO AWARDS CEREMONY. From left: Elaine Fuchs (USA), Anne Dejean-Assimon (France), Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones, chairman of L'Oréal, Alejandro Reyes (Mexico), Lourdes Cruz (Philippines), Rashika El Ridi (Egypt), Irina Bokova, director general of Unesco, and Günter Blobel, president of the 2010 awards jury

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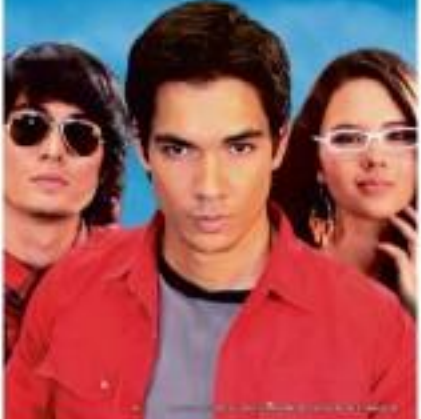

TWO GIANT EVENTS THIS M

Don't miss the spectacular final night of the Philippine International Pyromusical

Don't miss the grand final night of the Philippine International Pyromusical Competition!

March 14, 2010
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ARCH AT SM MALL OF ASIA

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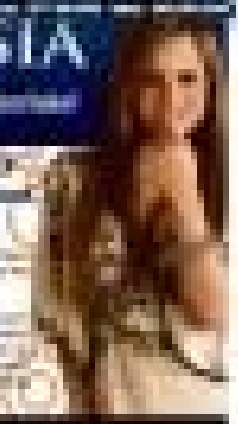

Three Music Superstars at the SM Mall of Asia this March 27

Prepare for a concert that will combine all contemporary hits when Timbaland, JoJo, and Justin Timberlake strike the MOA Open Grounds!

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March 27, 2010 | MOA Open Grounds

Admission: FREE

Filipina is first Asean winner of L'Oréal-Unesco Science Award

From page B1

from the academe, she stayed on to handle classes at the UP Marine Science Institute and continues to advise students on their scientific dissertations.

Cruz wants to work as long as she can, just like her father, who worked into his 80s.

Small cookie

Cruz has written over 130 scientific papers on various topics, including rice pests, marine turtle and parrots, and preserving the country's coastal ecosystem.

But her most famous discovery is the rice-stem moth (but garnered numerous awards for Cruz and her partner in the project, Dr. Baldomero Olivera).

The scientists thought they would be done with the research in two years, expecting that the moth would yield only one or two active components—just like snails venom.

"But it turns out that the moth venom contains many, many other components that affect nerves and muscles. So the work benefited off and got extended until 1988 and onwards," she said.

Research on Conotoxins is ongoing, with collaborations among Cruz's graduate students and foreign universities.

Rural Linc

In addition to her devotion to lab work, Cruz is also committed to helping society.

In 2000, she started the Rural Livelihood Incubator (Rural Linc) with the help of volunteers and private funding. Rural Linc strives to create jobs and fight poverty and monopolitical instability over the long term in rural Philippines.

"As a citizen of the Philippines, I am very concerned about the persistent high poverty trend in rural areas, particularly among disadvantaged communities such as the indigenous tribes, resource farmers and fishermen," she said.

Cruz's vision has been to use science and technology as tool to alleviate poverty among communities where scientists usually work.

Under the project, a team of scientists—from anthropologists to economists—work with them to develop the tribe's history, genealogy, area maps of their ancestral domains, and studies on the medicinal plants that Aetas have been using to cure diseases. Like vetiver that is used for chest heal.

"These are untapped wealth. I think one of the tricks of conservation is to try to find uses for them. For example, wild vines like bagnay (wild berry trees) and duhat (black plum) used to be chopped down for charcoal so they would die off. Here, they saw they could earn money from them," Cruz said.

Rural Linc also teaches Aetas skills like commercial bee keeping and makes indigenous people aware of their rights over natural resources in their area by translating the Indigenous People's Rights Act to the Aetas' dialect.

Determined to improve the lives of individuals in her community, Cruz plans to use the Elvira-UNESCO Award money to buy a piece of land to serve as new base for Rural Linc, and site for the women's fruit processing facility that will preserve Aetas' heritage.

"The project involves building a fruit processing facility run by women farmers, where the indigenous tribes can sell fruits from the orchards and forest trees."

A woman and a scientist who never loses sight of the country's perennial problems—poverty people's lives, Cruz is very active in addressing poverty in the Philippines. "After devoting all my time to a relatively productive scientific career, I asked myself what have I really done to help my country and my countrymen, particularly the poor communities?"

To those who want to be successful in their scientific careers, Cruz advises to learn how to get funds. "You need this for your research, so it's a must to start writing grants and getting your works published."

Cruz tells the young, who have an aptitude in science, never to give up. "To additional to talent, there are so many intangible benefits that go with it."

CNRS' with Loi-Olivier Marquet (left), managing director, L'Oréal Philippines, and Jean-Paul Agon, CEO, L'Oréal

WITH Irina Bokova (right), director-general of Unesco, and Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones, chairman of L'Oréal

L'ORÉAL-UNESCO awards laureates for 2010. From left, Anne Dejean-Thomas (France), Lourdes Cruz (Philippines), Alejandra Arana (Mexico), Rashika El Ridi (Egypt) and Elaine Fuchs (USA)

WITH sister-in-law Sylvia Cruz, sister Carmelita Cruz, Nina Navarro Talamisa (Philippine Ambassador to France and Monaco), (clockwise) Pia, niece Jennifer Cruz and Erica Cruz-Bjerke and her husband Aaron Bjerke

Toy Kingdom's Amazing Summer Splash

There's nothing like a day in the beach or playing in the pool for kids to play it cover during hot summer days. And whether they're in beach or pool bound, little can have a sweltering good time with amazing summer stuff from Toy Kingdom.

Tried-and-tile water and body boards to keep kids safest the water, as well as swim vests, goggles, and snorkel sets for exploring underwater wonders. There are beach play sets for building sand castles, sand guns to get them wet on water, and beach balls for fun in the sun.

These amazing summer stuff are available at Toy Kingdom it's branches outlets at SM Department Stores and at Toy Kingdom stores at SM Megamall, The Podium, Ayala, SM Megamall, SM Southmall, SM City Fairview, The Block at SM City North EDSA, and the SM Mall of Asia. In the provincial areas, these are available at Toy Kingdom stores located at the SM Department Store in Pampanga, Lucena, Bacolod, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao in the Visayas area. Also visit our website at www.toykingdom.ph.

Kids can explore their creativity with this colorful beach play set

Minnie Mouse goggles and a 14" beach ball to match

Make a grand sandcastle with this bear beach play set

Get ready for exciting water adventures with these life vests

Snorkel set for exploring the underwater world!

Tractor beach play set for tons of beachside fun

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Sonia Roco finds herself in a happy place /C1

Sunday LIFESTYLE

SaSUN at Nokia, FREE ang SIM at load mo!
At pag nag-load ka ng P20, meron kang additional FREE load na:
Unlimited texts*+ 5 minutes of calls*
Buy a Nokia 1202 or Nokia 1208 now to get your FREE Sun SIM and load!

The Regina Rosarii convent in Tanay, Rizal, promises to become a new shrine for ecology and contemplation

Silence, stillness and simplicity

By Jennelle S. Tayao

A PLACE OF PEACE IS what more cry-folk need to escape the everyday noise and worries—and what could be a better refuge than prayer and nature?

In Tanay, Rizal, the Dominican Sisters of the Regina Rosarii have put up the Regina Rosarii Institute of Contemplation in Asia (RICA), where the nuns share with visitors their life of silence, stillness and simplicity.

"We live in such a noisy world," says Sr. Eppie Abrol, OP, founder of the Regina Rosarii congregation. "Here at Regina RICA, we want people to experience contemplative prayer and hopefully, help them find peace in themselves."

Being built in the 13.5-ha hobby farm is 82- ft-tall image of Mary, Queen of the Holy Rosary. "It is Mg Inetsane we want to show the world the power of our Mother," says Abrol.

The image is the work of sculptor Jose Buccaya Jr., who has also created three other shrines in Davao, Tagaytay and in the nuns' mother house in Quezon City. The one in Tanay is the largest.

The Tanay shrine is an Adoration Chapel, and will have a hall-way where visitors can see the whole stretch of Regina RICA. The site has 10,000 trees, three waterfalls and a creek. The nuns grow their vegetables in

Front page/A1

WATCH THEM LIVE AT THE AYALA MALLS!
FEATURING THE SMASH HITS
"GOOD GIRLS GO BAD" AND "HOT MESS".
Greenbelt 3 Park, March 26, 6:30 PM, 757-4653
Activity Center, March 27, 6:30 PM, 843-2362 / 772-1860
Activity Center, March 29, 7:00 PM, 901-3800

Silence, stillness and simplicity

from page E1

BIGA, and also raise chickens, ducks, horses, rabbits and goats.

"We want BIGA to be an ecological sanctuary, a place where nature is taken care of," Bensil says. The town are also a source of BIGA funding—the Adopt-a-Tree movement sponsors can pledge P500 a month for 10 months.

However, it was "truly God's will" that brought in some badly needed money in the early phase of the shrine's construction last year.

Nun Bensil(sic) agreed to start the creation of our Mother's image for free," says Bensil. "But there came a point when our money needed to shell out money, to the tune, we needed P1 million."

Bensil, sick at that time, felt aggravated even more by the need to raise funds. "First day, a family requested to see the statue, to town if I was sick and worried. I think the best to raise the funds second." she says. At the end of the day, the family handed her their donation...echoed worth P1 million.

"It was a miracle," says Bensil.

Even the congregation's choice of Regina BIGA (the town is so called, not because of its location but because of its final area, 13.5 ha.

"The number 13.5 was like a sign to us because it is the feast of Our Lady of Fatima and our congregation's anniversary—May 13," says Bensil.

Regina BIGA is a three-tiered project. The ramp will have it into a pilgrimage site and retreat center, aside from being a place for contemplation.

"We also plan to put up a 'outdoor' gallery where many can touch people how to incorporate contemplation into their everyday lives," Bensil says.

So far, BIGA-1.5 has road network to almost finished, built by a generous construction company. There are also plans to build a chapel, a bishop-inside village, a multipurpose hall for concerts and other events, and an "oasis" (similar for refreshments and restroom).

For now, BIGA is open only to members of Regina Bensil's lay groups: Regina Bensil Contemplative Association, (RBCA), Regina Bensil Service Association (RBSA), Society of Single Living (SLL) and Club 513.

Adopt-a-Tree movement sponsors are also considered members. Non-members can attend the 11:00 Mass every second and fourth Sunday of the month. On May 13, Regina BIGA will have its grand blessing, an invitational event followed by an overnight visit. A 5 am Mass the next day will be open to the public.

Regina BIGA is along Marcos Highway, Brgy. Apalit, Kalinga-Apayao. Bensil, cell #09189870, 405-2686, 09189-2686, visit www.reginabiga.org. Regina Bensil's motherhouse is at 70 B.S. Aquino, Barangay Sagrada Familia, QC, cell #7350307, visit www.reginabensil.org.

MARVELS—explore the inside and surrounding areas of the shrine.

THE IMAGE—its crop a small hill, overlooking the 13.5 hectares of Regina BIGA.

SR. JEFFIE Bensil, OP, founder of the Dominican Sisters of the Regina Rosario.

Archdiocese of Lipa to launch one-year Centennial celebration

IN PREPARATION FOR THE CENTENNIAL celebration of the Archdiocese of Lipa starting April 30, Archbishop Ramon Arguelles led a three-day pastoral beginning with a Mass at the Cathedral, attending Fr. Hilarion Gascon to lead the group prayer rig.

The Mission, at the same time, appointed their vicars and 13 chaplains to accompany said pilgrim a pleasant independent under the canal conditions.

On April 30, Guadencio Cardinal Rosales, former Archbishop of Lipa, will officiate in the consolidated Mass at San Sebastian Cathedral with 19 bishops and clergy. Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, also an archbishop of Lipa, will be headed.

Theme of the celebration is "Renewing a People Issued Transformation like the Holy Family and Consecration to the Holy Triune."

Congress of Divine Mercy

On April 10-11, the Philippine Apostolic Congress on Mercy (Pamag) will take place in Lipa. Its theme is "Fr. Benny Mercado: United as speakers are Msgr. Jovellar Ramirez, Rector of the Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Archbishop Ramon Arguelles, Imus Bishop Chito Tagle, Academy Bishop Pablo David of San Fernando, Pampanga, Juan Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, Antipolo Bishop Bacolod, Malolos Manila and Bishop Jose Colin Bagaoisan of Catubato.

Bishop Eric's response

In response to the surprise being welcome Day of Mercy, Archbishop Arguelles said: "Bishop Bacolod received from his cousins and relatives during the reunion at the Our Lady of Virtues Chapel in Malabon, he said during his homily. "Today, it is a great joy and deep concern for me to be here. I remember especially my grandfather Benny de Mendoza-Bacolod. He did love his grandmother who was also his godmother. When he came to the Philippines in 1899, he was Anglo moved by the way he and his wife, my grandmother, were welcome, and he sought us to be grateful to them who helped us hands during the dark years.

The name of Arguelles has always been a family faith and friendship is as. Rituals in the Philippines have always been of great interest to us. The part of the world is part of our world.

"Faith is my delight. I accompanied the Filipinos consistently to Lourdes last October, when this community of freed a beautiful mosaic reminding the Virgin Power of 1900" in Saint "Rosse-sanctuary."

The forthcoming of Bishop Eric to Klundle was a project of the Mission Catholique en France. He was accompanied by members of the Filipino community in Paris that included Rhel Corpuz, secretary-general, and Fr. Gil Apoli, chaplain of the Philippine Chaplaincy of Mission Catholique en France.

PURELY PERSONAL

Josephine Dionisio

Those who came

Those present for Bishop Eric's homecoming were from Antonio A Bonus of the Don Pedro Home side and his first cousin Bridal Bonus. Heading the Bilgo Home line were Concordia Macalalan and Rosendo Yumul, followed by John Spakowski, Marilyn Spakowski and Fra Macalalan Spakowski, Eric Macalalan, Primo Abrazo, Camille Macalalan, Chantal Fernan, Pedro Alcantara, Lolita Delgado-Sanchez and Doris Bellin Delgado. The Sacramentary community Tomas Bonus, Gregoria Matias Arellano (cousin) present for the Bonuses) Manuel Gomez, Marilyn Gallarte and her daughter Camille, Marilyn's sister Vicky Gallarte, Rose Quintana and Lita Quintana.

Aranaza-Zaragoza clan

From the Aranaza-Zaragoza line came Josie Concha(ex-Ursal), Jesus G. Pilotes, architect Homer Aranaza, Gregg Antonio and Elvira Aranaza Avila, children of Don Luis Aranaza, Carlos and Connie Aranaza and their son Carlos and daughter-in-law Joy Bonabay and Ruby Aranaza, Maria Angela and Antonio who was the youngest of the event; Marites Clemente, Marilou Sena, Concordia Villegas, Celineh Rhodium, Irene B. Jamaica, Mina Cabrera, Isabel Antonio, Rhine Abrial, Nina A. Bears, Peregrina A. Lim, Bobi and Esteban Lim, Dhet and Bernard Antonio, Nanette and Marichu B. Bert, Conchitina Lodoc, Mario and Richard Elmer, Tony Antonio Jr.amps, Vicky Santos Jr.amps, Nino Santos Jr.amps who supported the completion of Nicholas Bonabay's medical examination, Bert and daughter Nikki Santos Jr.amps, Marlene and Joe Concepcion, Edcel, Bernie Concepcion and Enrique Concepcion, Marie Rizza, Francis Reyes and Tito Reyes; Lina Asuncion Santiago and her daughter Dennis and Donnelle's husband Jayson Ed Linares and their children Carolina and Edward.

Lina Santiago did a thorough research on the Bonus-Zaragoza Aranaza clan because for the told me), she's deep into family ties.

Sharing Christ's home

The Brothers of Christ, a congregation founded by Servant of God Brgy. Alexius Schwartz, will inaugurate its Dharang Christi home, a home for the elderly, mentally challenged and out of school youth on Wednesday, March 17. It is at Casanova de los Reyes Avenue in Barangay Bolbok, Gen. Trias, Cavite. Bishop Emilio Boyle will celebrate Mass at 10 a.m. and bless the facilities.

Healing Masses

Fr. Stefano Gorelli, SSS, will celebrate Healing Mass on March 14 at 9 a.m. in the Promenade by Mars Mall, Greenhills. On March 28 at 9 p.m., he will be at the St. Joseph Shrine in San Juan, Batangas.

BISHOP of Puris Eric de Houlon (Antoni de Bocador) reads the homily and thanks his relatives in Manila.

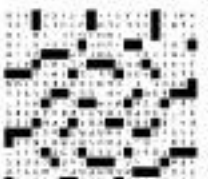
SUNDAY CROSSWORD

PREMIER CROSSWORD By Frank A. Longo

OFF TO A GREAT START

answer on page E2

ANSWER TO SUNDAY CROSSWORD



Is fried food frying your body?

Cool down with New Yin Yang 阴阳 Cooling Tea

The natural way to help fight internal heat, which develops from eating fried food*.

What you eat can cause internal heat

The Chinese believe that good health begins with good balance in the body. Eating fried food alters the body's temperature and causes imbalance, resulting in what the Chinese refer to as "internal heat". When not, the body should not be too quickly brought into contact with something cold, and vice versa. This interaction of "hot" and "temp" can cause illness, such as rheumatism.

The cooling power of Chinese plant extracts

To treat internal heat, traditional Chinese therapeutic practice relies on the cooling effects of certain Chinese plants.Mesona chinensis Benth, Camellia sinensis from natural Green Tea Leaves, Liquorice Root and Chrysanthemum Flower. These plants have been trusted through time to fight specific imbalances in the body. Once the heat is removed, the balance is achieved and good health is restored.

Cool down with New Yin Yang Cooling Tea

Now, all these cooling plant extracts are in a cool and refreshing ready to drink cooling tea that fights internal heat - new Yin Yang Cooling Tea! Restore your body's balance and counteract internal heat with its deliciously refreshing Black Guiaman (Grass Jelly) flavor that goes well with all your favorite meals.

To drink up, cool down and beat internal heat with new Yin Yang Cooling Tea!

helps **Restore & refresh** your body's balance **naturally!**

*According to traditional Chinese beliefs.

BOARDSHORTS FUN AT SURPLUS

Whether you're heading for the beach, biking up the mountains, or simply enjoying a summer day in the city, boardshorts are the way to go. Lightweight, durable, and comfortable, boardshorts these have become the attire of choice of both the sporty -think surfers, skaters, windsurfers, and kayakers - as well as the stylish set.

At Surplus, boardshorts are the top summer story - blooming in hibiscus prints, playing it cool in stripes and geometric prints . Worn with tank tops and racerback tees in the most vibrant of summer colors, these will make you stand out on the beach and beyond.

SM Advantage Cardholders will also be getting a treat when they buy boardshorts and other summer stuff at Surplus. Every P300 purchase from March 15 to May 31, 2010 entitles them to buy a fun towel for only P99.00.

The boardshorts collection is available at Surplus stores at almost all SM Supermalls.

GREAT FASHION FINDS
at surplus

casual

Cotton Sleeveless Shirt

Cotton Muscle Shirt

Long Boardshorts

Beach Footwear

rugged

Cotton Round Neck Tees

The Dyed Boardshorts

Beach Footwear

hip

Printed Cotton Shawl

Woven Short Sleeved Polo

Floral Boardshorts

Beach Footwear

SURPLUS

Flowers blouses in chic green hibiscus printed reversible boardshorts worn with a green ribbed tank top.

Summer prints pop out in this blue boardshorts worn with a light blue tank top.

Summer sizzle in the yellow tanktop worn with red hibiscus printed boardshorts.

IN THIS ISSUE
■ A thousand and one thrills in Taiwan /H4

Sunday LIFESTYLE

And now, maps and street directions on your phone

Nokia's Ovi Maps has over 1,000 city guides by Lonely Planet

By Ronna Capili
Contributor

WHAT IS WITH JUST a few clicks of your cell phone, the possibility of getting lost in a foreign place is eliminated, with maps and even street directions now available on your mobile?

Last February, Nokia launched the Nokia 5800 at the Showcase Nokia 2010 held in Bangkok, Thailand. At the event, the company announced it was now transitioning from a purely mobile device company to one offering solutions with its music services, applications and messaging, all by Nokia's Ovi suite.

"What we're focusing on is delivering experiences. The combination of device and service delivers the experience to the user, nature at the end of the day," said Chris Carr, vice president for South East Asia Pacific Sales.

Location service

Nokia's location service solution features a drive and walk navigation that allows users to find their way in almost any major city without having to open a computer or fish out a city map from the car's glove compartment.

Ovi Maps is available in 74 countries in 46 languages, including the Philippines, and is free of charge for compatible Nokia devices. Stored maps can be downloaded from the Ovi Maps website (http://maps.ovi.com) and then transferred to devices. The world map measures 4 gigabytes; the Greater Manila area ranges from 30to 120MB.

Ashka Hinde, director of Services Marketing for Luxonline, said Ovi Maps was designed to answer consumers' desire for a "great out-of-the-box experience without hidden costs."

He added that Ovi Maps is 10 times more efficient than Google

AND HOW H

Dreams have deadlines

The ultimate dream does not come on a silver platter. Owning a home has always been a challenge to many Filipinos. However, the biggest stumbling block to making this dream(s) real is that seemingly insurmountable...

The big question is, where do you save first big step to your first dream home? You may be a young urban professional on the second rung of the corporate ladder who may have just married and is ready to start that next stage of life's plan or your wife may have recently given birth to your first born. Whatever your reasons for being dreaming the night's turned with the mere value of thinking about the right time.

Wouldn't it be better that you always have a home? And isn't it very important for anyone to own a home that you can call your own?

Taking The First Step

The Ayala Land Homestarter Bond is a home loan facility for a home that allows individuals to save on a monthly basis with a minimum subscription of P5,000 per month for three years earning the pension interest per annum and additional tax-exempt bonus credit if used as downpayment for an Ayala Land property.

According to Augusto D. Bengzon, Vice President and Treasurer of Ayala Land, investors who will P5,000 a month each (P1 a year on a loan) can qualify for an Ayala A-rate. "We have structured several enhancements to make it even more flexible and beneficial to our subscribers. Since the second issue of the Homestarter Bond, the limit for the maximum subscription has been removed and after covering the 12th month, the bonus credit the subscriber can enjoy is one P10,000 (as compared to the 36th month)," says Bengzon.

More Than Just a Financial Instrument

While the Homestarter Bond, which was first launched in 2008 and another tranche in 2009, has proven to be an unmatched financial tool, it has value beyond being a mere means to an end. "The Homestarter Bond yields financial benefits to its subscribers. While years of saving adds a minimum of P5,000 monthly is very good practice for monthly amortization, or just saving is general," says Rai Mo, a Homestarter. Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing and Sales Officer of Ayala Land.

Being a Homestarter Bond subscriber also gives you a chance to be the first to know about any down deal new or upcoming Ayala Land projects. At any time during the three-year investment period, you have the option to redeem or Ayala Land Premier Bonds or bonds issued by and apply the bond as downpayment.

"There's really no better time to maintain your investment pace of saving now and make that now," noted Mendoza. "Ayala Land through the Homestarter Bond is taking away the stumbling blocks for the subscribers to finally take on that dream. And true to Ayala Land's vision of enhancing lives and building lives, the company is not only providing a very safe financial instrument that gives genuine interest, you are also taking given the chance to live your life and create memories in a place that you can call your own."

Indeed, the journey towards home ownership begins with that first step, start your own journey towards owning your dream home early with the Ayala Land Homestarter Bond. Turn your dream home into reality now and allow your family to cherish good times in your own Ayala Land home.

To subscribe, call BPI Capital Manila at [illegible] Paseo 524 3511, Greenbelt 729 7000, 450 [illegible] Cebu 232 [illegible], Davao 221 [illegible] or visit any BPI Investment Center nationwide.

Issue Size
[illegible] million with an Oversubscription Option of [illegible] million to be issued over [illegible] months, up to P10 million per month or up to P40 million upon exercise of the Oversubscription Option, fully subscribed

Offer Period
March 8, 2010 to April 9, 2010

Issue Dates
Every 15th calendar month from April 9, 2010 to March 2013

Subscription
Minimum of P5,000 per month (P 60,000 over 1 years) and in increments of P5,000 per month in excess thereof

Maturity Date
April 10, 2013

Interest Rate
3% per annum

Payment Options
Principal and interest net of taxes, may be (i) applied as home equipment for an Ayala Land Property or
(ii) received in cash on Maturity Date

Bonus Credit
50% of principal amount of the Bonds if applied to payment for an Ayala Land Property, subject to a maximum of 5% of net selling price of the property selected. May not be availed in conjunction with Ayala Group employee discounts.

HE'S TAKEN HIS FIRST STEP, WHAT ABOUT YOU?

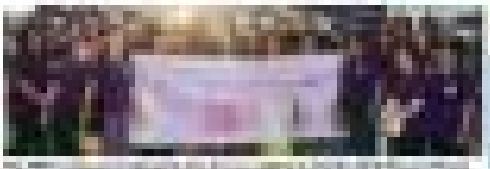
Take the first step in owning the home your family deserves. For as low as P5,000 per month, your ideal home is within reach with the Ayala Land Homestarter Bond.

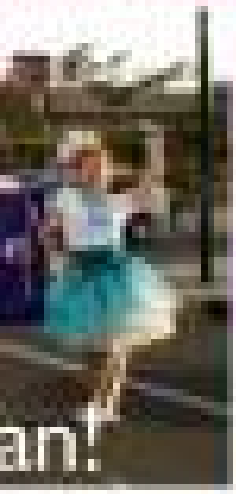
AYALA LAND HOMESTARTER BOND

BPI Capital Corporation

Babae, Tagumpay ka ng Baya

A Walk for Women's Rig





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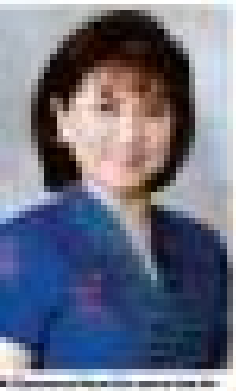
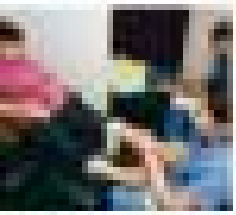




Dove celebrates its 10th anniversary and declares every woman's right to be Totally Beautiful

Dove

And now, maps and street directions on your phone

From page F1

maps in terms of data transfer and lower data costs, and is the most user- and energy-efficient location service in the market today.

Its GPS navigation system, which offers voice-command navigation, real-time traffic and route updates, is so good in built-in car navigation systems. The online service for real-time updates is convenient by being set up for user rates with local telecommunications companies.

The maps are verified by TRAFFIX, Nokia's digital map data and content company, based on actual driving and walking tests through the streets. They are updated several times a year.

The option to share one's location through social networking site Facebook is available. A few clicks on your mobile device, and a real-time update (with photo, if you like) of the best burger in town, a must-go-to sale or a celebrity sighting can be published on your Facebook account through GPS.

As of Feb. 15, over three million Ovi Maps have been downloaded globally. That translates to more than one download per second, adding up to more than 300,000 downloads per day.

Ovi Maps is the current choice for navigation around the world. Over 1,000 city guides by Lonely Planet are also available through Ovi.

"Free navigation is just the starting point. The end game is that we have a third party, any content provider or application provider who has that data and develops applications that use navigation or mapping, or showing places on their applications. That's the future. But today it's about free navigation," said Hoikio.

CHRIS Carr, vice president for South East Asia Pacific Sales

SHOWCASE Nokia 3810 Ovi Maps model

Other offerings

The other Ovi Store offerings, such as Ovi Music, Store and Mail, were also highlighted as Showcase Nokia 2010.

Ovi Music allows users to download music from the website and discover unsigned acts from the Nokia Independent Artists' Club. Ovi Store will be available in more languages, offer better billing support and carry more applications this 2010. Currently it logs more than 1,000,000 downloads a day.

Ovi Mail, meanwhile, which allows users to receive and send e-mail through mobile devices with the push e-mail service, has had over 6,000,000 accounts created in just a year after its launch. Thirty percent of Ovi Mail users come from South-east Asia.

Open-ended design

The Nokia N900, which will come out in the market this month, is an "open-ended" phone in that "it allows users to put whatever application they want," said Nikki Barton, Nokia's head of Digital Design.

For example, the phone has a home screen that can be personalized with applications, and multiple home screens to allow for multitasking.

However, simplicity and ease of use remain key factors in the design, so that a user who prefers a simpler setup need not even bother himself with such functions, said Barton. The mobile device's interface designs adapt to users' preferences with ease.

Barton revealed that psychologists work with Nokia designers to help achieve their phone's user-friendliness, by researching which natural inclinations and habits of people can be translated into interface design. Most users find touchscreens easy to use, the Nokia N900 has this feature—but still with a pullout querty keyboard for those who'd prefer the classic mode.

IN SALUTE TO FILIPINO ARTISTRY, BRAVO! PRESENTS CECILE LICAD

From her music flows inspiration. Be captivated by this world-renowned classical pianist.

March 18, 2010
Thursday, 7:00PM
The Gallery, Greenbelt 5
with the Manila Symphony Orchestra
under the baton of Arturo Molina

March 20, 2010
Saturday, 6:00PM
Trillanes Park Level 4

March 21, 2010
Sunday, 6:00PM
Alabang Town Center
Activity Center

Ayala · Ayala Malls · Ayala Museum

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Silence, stillness and simplicity /E1

Sunday LIFESTYLE Relationships

Till death do us part? Only till the third year

By James Konrad
Correspondent

THE SHELF LIFE OF MANY marriages in the US is now three or so years, shorter than previously thought. Couples divorce in their third year of togetherness, or on their ninth year.

Sociology Professor Kelly Musick (University of Southern California) and Larry Bumpass (University of Wisconsin-Madison) found this to be the "dominant pattern, or typical experience" of married and unmarried American couples living together.

Their findings were derived from a representative sample of almost 9,700 couples from over the 10 years a six-year period.

Unfortunately, there is no similar study in the Philippines and no available data on how long happy marriages last and what happens next.

But "what might a Filipino couple, newly wed or just around living together, experience?

Disillusionment

Maribel Ebreinto, a popular

Surprising fact: For every five married Pinoys, there is one who is separated or divorced

marriage and family expert in Cebu (SE Cdy), says the three-year blip is usually just one year in itself, and that couple troubles "can begin on their very first night."

The New York Times quoted Prof. Bumpass as saying that some of the couples they studied had reported being "unhappy" even at the wedding reception.

Ebreinto explains that, usually, the Pinoy couple's first year is blissful and their second year is when disillusionment sets in.

"In your can tell after the first few years of marriage if the couple will make it," she says.

If they stay together, they may go through a period of despair while trying to resolve their conflicts, and may seek counseling for help.

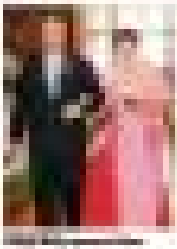
"But, sadly, sometimes, there is nothing counseling can do to save the marriage," she adds.

Ebreinto is also seeing an increase in the number of couples breaking up three days after being married for only three years or less.

The latest census data (2000) disputes the notion that married Filipinos stay married for life, despite the religious value placed on marriage by a predominantly Roman Catholic people.

Lina V. Gomez of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) says census data puts the number of Pinoys who identify themselves as separated or divorced to one percent of 77.2 million.

Surprisingly a small percentage, equivalent to only 309,823 individuals, but when compared to the total count of marriages



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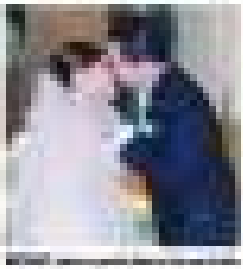
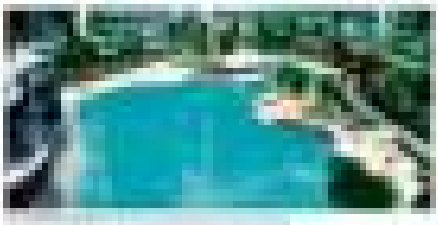
COLLEGE SWEETHEARTS

A campus romance with a twist



Till dea

[to] large-scale man-made beach



w life—as a musical

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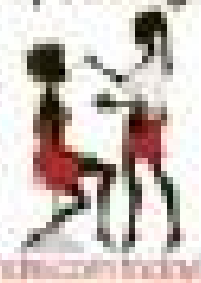

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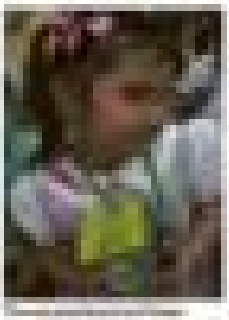

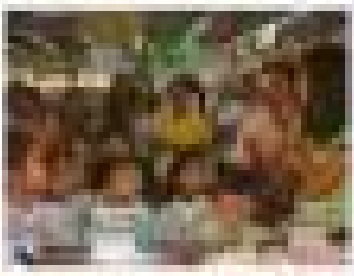

Finding rest for your soul

"Women hold up half the sky."
—Chinese proverb

LAST NOVEMBER, I WENT away for seven days to a quiet place on the hills of Sierramonte, California. I then wrote about it. To my great surprise, my inbox was flooded with mail from women of different ages, seeking a place closer to home where they could find rest for their souls. Some spoke of wanting to get away but couldn't because of professional or domestic responsibilities, but their yearning was great.

A few weeks ago, I again took time off to do some serious writing for a book. This time, I wanted a place close to my heart, and much closer to home.

Inspired by Anne Morrow Lindbergh and her frequent excursion to the sea to exchange herself and write, a close friend and I hiked sacredness up for three days at Montemar Beach Club in Batangas. As Morrow Lindbergh used to say, one must be open to the gifts of the sea. I was pleasantly surprised by what I found.

Though it is a much older resort, it has kept its charm. The drive, a pleasant, less than three-hours on the smooth, traffic-free, world-class SLEX. Traveling to Ibaan, Batangas, a stone first and in the car stereo, your stress level already drops. The people of Batangas are very kind and laid-back.

Montemar has one of the widest and cleanest shorelines. The waters are so clean and clear you can actually see fish and corals with them. The rooms have been renovated and are comfortable, most of them retaining that late '80s charm. In the morning when you wake up, a gentle breeze pushes through your window, and outside you hear the rhythmic lapping of the waves upon the shore.

I told my friend that swimming in Montemar was like cutting home. And because home is chiefly associated with comfort food, I was happy to discover that as well. Chef Ed Quimson now heads over the Mesa, Montemar's coffee shop, where they serve a wide array of the best Spanish and Filipino dishes I have had in a long while.

To burn off those calories, you can go kayaking or swim to your friend's cottage in the waters of the bay or in the club's swimming pool. The last part I loved about this beach club was the peace and quiet of early morning, as my quiet walk along the shore after a hearty dinner. Above me was a canopy of stars, it felt like I was inside the illumination of my childhood, and the soothing sound of the waves was like a lullaby on the shore.

I spent two days there, and I am hoping to return soon with a couple of my best friends to let them experience the wonderment of Montemar's solitude. No large crowds, no fuss, no noise. Only a quiet cove, a gentle hug the rustling of leaves and the fascinating of birds in a place where you can hear your thoughts and still your heart.

Call Montemar Beach Club sales office at (632) 8924497-98, 8151666 for information on the women's wellness getaway packages.

Roots and Wings

Cathy Babao-Gobaliw

Field of Faith

If you want to take the most spiritual path and still socialize with friends, and only have half a day to spare, come and visit the field of faith in Calauan, Laguna. How you can get to the foothills of a prayer mountain, or do the Stations of the Cross by yourself amid the greenery.

A gentle breeze and lush greens surround this haven for the soul. There is a labyrinth hall, an early Christian meditative tool, and you can walk through it while reciting thoughts.

On April 3, Dr. Nelia Bolisay and Sister Amara Rau will give a talk on "From Brokenness to Wholeness—A Psychospiritual Approach." Call or text Carina at 0927-9151585.

Good Shepherd Convent in Tagaytay

This place has been my refuge for years now. I turn to it when life luxuries too complicated or whenever I need to breathe deeper thoughts. Nestled high on the hills with a magnificent view of Taal volcano, that is a necessity.

If you want to spend a night there, you may arrange with the sisters (046-4134207). Prior arrangement must be made.

E-mail carlybabao@gmail.com

An estimated 12 Filipino women die of **cervical cancer** each day, a disease caused by certain types of **HPV** or the **Human Papillomavirus.** These same HPV types can also cause **vaginal and vulvar cancers**, while other types cause **genital warts.** But did you know that HPV **also affects men?** In men, HPV can cause genital warts. Genital warts affect about 32 million men and women worldwide annually and HPV can be transmitted to others.

Fortunately, both men and women can be vaccinated to help protect themselves from certain HPV diseases. **Ask your doctor about ways to help protect yourself from cervical cancer, vaginal cancer, vulvar cancer, genital warts and other HPV related diseases.**

Together, We Fight!

Insecure about noncommittal BF

DEAR EMILY,

My boyfriend and I have been together for 10 months now and I am still confused if he is serious or not. He gave me his mother's ring on our 2nd monthsary saying the ring would only be given to the girl he would marry. Several months passed and no marriage plans were discussed. I tried to ask him three times about it. At first, he answered "we'll discuss it soon," and months later I blurted out "why are you in such a hurry?"

Emily's Post

Emily A. Marcelo

Several incidents confirm me about his insecurities and plans for us. After we were introduced in August 2007, he asked me out on the same month. Later, I found out he had only broken up with his former girlfriend in June of the same year. So, did he get interested in me or the rebound idea? On our fifth month, I saw his text message to a girl who used to be the cause of our arguments, telling her he no longer wants to continue their relationship. I confronted him about this incident two months later, which got him angry. He asked why I didn't confront him earlier because he said he no longer recalls the reason for that text.

He does not know my birthday, his classmates even introduce me to his buddies, despite my wanting to meet them myself. I have met his family once and even made me a secondary sponsor of his sister's wedding. He told me he is trying hard to convince me he is serious and that he is lucky to have met me, who for once is beyond comparison with his two other past girlfriends. Am I just insecure or he just doesn't have any clear plans yet? I am really confused and I think I still don't trust him.

—GIRLFRIEND WITH QUESTIONS

Considering the fact that you've only been going steady over a year, isn't it already a bit of a commitment that your boyfriend gave you his mother's ring, and even made you part of his sister's wedding?

Didn't you say he even thanked his lucky that he met you after dumping the other girls? But that didn't stop you from overanalyzing those nagging thoughts and it's very saddening how much your relentless insecurities show him.

Second hint when you actually catch him two-timing you. Clobber him if he doesn't introduce you to his buddies, when you're with him. And as for your birthday, how will he know? If you hadn't told him, did you expect him to compile it and surprise you that he found it all by himself?

Since you like to put his relationship under the microscope, stop screening him and making him go through the wringer with this guessing game by giving him a list of everything there is to know about you—your birthday, your family, all the schools you went to, names of all your relatives, friends, old boyfriends, enemies, your favorite food, movies, color, etc.

Be very wary of your impulsiveness, as he might wake up one morning and ask himself what the hell he has gotten into—having such an insecure girlfriend in his life.

It's not like you've been going steady for decades and he hasn't made a sliver of a commitment to you at all. What's the matter with you? Why are you agonizing with such determination toward marriage?

Get to know each other well—talking it out about—and develop a bond that is strong enough to pull you both to your dream destination. Be wise!

What's your insecurity all about? Accept that some men have congenitally low hormones.

E-mail emmarcelo@inquirer.com.ph, subject: Lifestyle

IN THIS ISSUE
■ Till death do us part?
Only till the third year /G1

Sunday LIFESTYLE

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It wasn't a politico's wife who got the coveted Birkin

THE GOLD 30-CM BIRKIN[sup] (no. 0002), with over nine-carat diamonds, whose price tag was as much as a piece of real estate, was sold at the formal opening of Hermes on Wednesday. That's good news for the French luxury house tied to local partners, the Tantocos.

But an even better news: According to the grapevine, the buyer was not a wife of a politician, millinery celebrity or nouveau rich ill-gotten wealth.

While Hermes is mum about the buyer's identity, sources told Inq7.net it isn't a well-off consumer who either loves the Birkin or believes it's a better investment than keeping one's money in the bank or buying a condo unit.

It wasn't the first Birkin sold at the Greenbelt 3 store since it opened over two months ago. Hermes still not disclose the exact number but, even with the very limited supply, it's safe to assume it has sold a considerable number/s. It was, however, the most precious. The manner by which country manager Mavis Ratigbak showed it to the buyers should give you an idea just how.

When asked what the centerpiece of the iconic duo's grand opening would be, Ratigbak briefly went into the store's safe and stepped out with a package in his hands. He laid it out on the table, carefully unwrapping the rises bag, a tabate glazed ostrich sight behind him. A few of us gathered around, hushed in anticipation.

There there it was. There were audible gasps.

BERTRAND Michaud

Dressed as he showed off his exotic purple baby, Anne dropped us he quoted the price. His explanation said he knew he'll bid a goodbye the next day. He gladly so.

True luxury is...

In the glitz and glam of the Hermes opening Wednesday, which drew the Who's Who, what stood out were the statements of Hermes regional marketing director for India, Middle East and Southeast Asia, Bertrand Michaud.

Recalling his media at an intimate lunch before the opening, how Hermes waited for 10 years to have the right spot for the store in Manila, Michaud said: "Time is the best advisor. One must have the patience to wait."

Indeed, the French executive was describing not only Hermes' business formula but also his philosophy.

He explained that speed and expansion weren't really his brand's quality. Then he added that the handcrafted leather bag—the hallmark of his firm, which is almost 200 years old—takes more than 20 hours to make, and the craftsman who works on each bag takes three years to train. "There's no craftsman for each bag; the bag is not done in assembly-line process.

"They work in silence, in an almost monastic fashion," he said.

Interestingly, there are more women than men now among the craftspeople, their average age 22.

Michaud himself has been with Hermes for more than 20 years. Asked how he finds his work, he said: "Luxury is finding pleasure when you go to work."

Now that it truly redefining luxury for this monumentals age.

Bagsia crashes on did Bullock's clutch

Sandra Bullock scored an impressive grand slam win, and it wasn't just her trophies that she clutched throughout the events awards season.

Tina Grampa's Colombian shoe scored a coup as the luxe, science winner chose three of the Filipina's tremendous designs for three separate awards shows.

Bullock was given 20 bags to choose from by her stylist. Of this lot, Bullock chose the three Colombias. Bullock has been toting Colombias at major awards events for two years now.

For the 82nd Academy Awards, the actress yanked a hand-hammered sterling silver style made by Bagsia's silversmith. It had an oil-based effect that complemented her silvery-gold Marchesa dress.

Earlier, she chose an oxidized sterling silver wood remember with a high heels clasp, matching the necklace of her black Alexander McQueen dress. She also used Colombia at

It wasn't a politico's wife who got the coveted Birkin

From page B1

the Cultural Center Theatre Awards.

As expected, the day after the Oscars, the brand was flooded with e-mails from major US stores such as Barney's, inquiring about Bulleck's dress/bag.

After the Oscars, the actress graciously sent a thank-you note to Tita, who gifted her with the bag she wore to the Oscars.

Pacquiao in GQ

Top men's magazine GQ profiles people's champ Manny Pacquiao in its April issue, in an article called "The Biggest Little Man in the World."

Writer Andrew Costello traveled to the Philippines for a week in December in a mere "rush interview" to have some face-to-face time with Manny Pacquiao.

Costello's unique in-depth account provides a very colorful insight into the world of the boxer and the power of sports among his men, reflectively called Team Pacquiao: who gets to sleep at the foot of his bed, who gets to "hold" his shoe.

The profile is an attempt to unravel the mystery behind Pacquiao's popularity: a man, the charm and appeal that extends far beyond the boxing ring, Astonishingly, Costello ends up doing even more.

Singson's 'Type'

The GQ article has shocking, some quite distasteful, comments about the people who surrounded Pacquiao, among them his close friend Luis "Chavit" Singson, the former Ilocos Sur governor described by Costello as "one of the most powerful men in the Philippines."

On a plane ride with Singson to Pacquiao's birthday party in the boxer's General Santos City home, one hears Pacquiao member organized his surprise that Singson hadn't yet drawn the secret life plan in his wallet. It was that of a girl's severed and mutilated member. Costello was told. It was that of the lover of Singson's mistress; he sought them together—six episode which landed the front pages of our tabloid broadsheets.

"After the Governor's guys had held it on a table and rehashed it with a hammer, it had to be surgically cut off after 'too minded,' said Costello's informer.

The writer also details his conversation with Singson, where the latter told him of his attempt to disembowel Pat Aquino Kelly and a tiger. Singson wanted to extract a "tiger," he said the best of inner thoughts of a person.

Smashed

It's not the end of the world, but the 8-1 thrashing suffered by the Philippine Davis Cup team against Japan during their Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group 1 tie recently at the Numbuyan Dome in Oita, Japan should answer in six-syllable opinion for those who love the sport.

Before the debacle, which brought back the painful memory of a similar shutout loss to Japan in 2008 at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center, team official Fonty Villanueva and non-playing captain Dodo Catarin were seething with confidence.

They were wishfully wrong, of course.

The Japanese proved unstoppable as they smashed Cecil Mamiit and company to submission.

What made the setback hard to bear was the 6-1, 6-0 drubbing Francis Casey Alcantara suffered in the hands of fourth-rated Go Soeda in the no-bearing reverse singles.

Alcantara, after all, is dubbed by many as the next big thing in RP tennis, after a breakout campaign that saw the 2009 Australian Open doubles competitor.

But don't blame Alcantara and company. They gave it their best try. Tennis officials must admit that handicap selections will work only temporarily in saving the sport.

Simply put, the 33-year-old Mamiit can't play forever, gentlemen.

Exclusivity and premium benefits for high-end cardholders

TO ENSURE PREMIUM VALUE AND exclusivity for affluent American Express Cardmembers, BDO, issuer of both American Express Platinum Charge and Credit Cards in the Philippines, carefully chooses high-end establishments to participate in the American Express Platinum Partners Program.

According to Ms. Maureen Regala, Business unit head of BDO Consumer Lending Group, Marketing: "The program has succeeded in building a loyal customer base for American Express. It takes great effort to understand the needs and lifestyle of the affluent customer."

American Express Platinum Cardmembers enjoy as high as 35 percent savings when they use their cards to settle bills in over 60 restaurants, shops and wellness centers in Metro Manila. Cebu and Boracay.

The establishments include dining outlets of The Peninsula Manila, Hotel Intercontinental Manila, Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, as well as Elizabeth Arden, Estella, Escada Sports, H. John Lobregat, Manchila spa, and Jewelry Hills 4754 Cosmetic Surgery and Skin Institute, to name a few.

"The program's success hinges on the value of establishments offered to our cardmembers. We do not do far after long and careful study," Regala says. "It involves finding the places favored by our clients so we know where they are going and what they enjoy doing, and we update the list every year."

Every year, Cardmembers receive a catalog enumerating outlets that are part of the Platinum Partners Program.

Other wellness centers participating in the program are The Spa, The Peninsula Manila Spa, Nov Day Spa, and advanced Aesthetics Inc. The latter offers 50 percent savings on Ultrashape Treatments among other privileges.

Shops include 101 New York, Atelier Asmo, Asmo Jewels, Bonnie Boucher, Polly Booked, Beckport, Sandwich, T. Florence Jewelry, Tiffany, Tuscon, Silverhouse, and Vitruli.

Cardmembers also enjoy other privileges and benefits at 60 hotel partners, 37 travel merchants, 240 dining outlets, and 23 wellness merchants in the Philippines participating in the American Express Selects program, and over 5,000 Selects offers globally.

Platinum Cardmembers likewise enjoy 24/7 concierge service for restaurant bookings, ticket reservations, golf delivery within Asia Pacific countries, among other services for Basic.

Call the 24-hour Customer Service Hotline at 81-417.

RETAILERS FLY-IN TO PREVIEW ABREEZA MALL

Over two hundred retailers from Metro Manila and Cebu flew in to Davao last February 19 to preview Abreeza Mall. The 2.9-hectare mall is set to open in the 2nd quarter of 2011 and to date, over 60% of leasable space has already been leased out, the part of a 10-hectare mixed use development which will also include a BPO building.

Various fashion, food and service merchants were treated to a fam-pad event, beginning with a site visit to Abreeza, where construction is in full swing and then capped off by a special luncheon at the Royal Farm Manila.

Present at the Abreeza fact finding was the Robinsons Retail Group, Abreeza's anchor partner, led by Ms. Rubina Gokongwei-Pe. Also there were Mr. Abelardo Nuevara and Ian Tengzon of Cebalen, Mr. William Tan of Jollibee, Mr. Eric Pano of Yellow Cab.

Antonino Aquino (Ayala Land), Ivan Yao (Lucerna/Chronos), Tony Boy Palermo (Anflo Group), Marlet Atienzano (Ayala Malls), Snow Mark Gan (GADC-Metro)

Seated: Ryan Sison, Stanley Co, Carmina Quizon, Celina Chua & joe joaquin (Robinsons Group). Standing: Cora Sison and Rowena Tarrobillas (Ayala Malls) with Rubina Gokongwei-Pe (Robinsons Group)

Mr. Alvson Chu of Breadtalk, Mr. Robert Sarmiento of Bistro Group, Mr. Bryan Lim of the Ranch Group, Mr. Dino Segura of the Penshoppe Group, Mr. Mike and Vic Jr. Munoz of Gotokuto Ramen Shop, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Lim of Mandarin, Ms. Mel Dominguez of Wild Flowers, Prominent, Nationwide), Ms. Joanna Duarte of Big and Small, Mr. Jimmy Lim of Indonesian and Mr. Raffy Pinto of Time Zone. Mr. Quito Lopez of Starbucks, Mr. Steve Ramirez of Bo's Coffee and Mrs. Julia Urbina of Café Laguna. Various shoes, whose coffee shops and restaurants are opening their branches in Davao were also there. In addition, Ms. & Mrs. Eric Teng of Mashiba, Mr. Frida Ong of Lanzada Shoes, Mr. Brian Gemma Tang of Cotton On/MO and Ms. Beth Co of Manolita joined the event as well as Cebu retailers like Ms. Camilla Alibegue of Island Souvenirs and Mr. Chris Alibegue of Lovable. Merchants who are opening their first in Davao shops also graced the activity. This included Mr. Ivan Yao of Lucerna, Mr. George Mirano and Mr. Avinash Ullal of branches of the Promod/Trinity Group and Ms. Sandra Antonio of 925. Ms. Denise Go of BPI also brought her team to meet the merchants.

Also present during the event were Senior Executives from Ayala Land led by its president, Antonino T. Aquino. The Anflo Group was also there to welcome the merchants to Davao led by its chairman, Don Antonio O. Floirendo Sr.

The Abreeza development is a project of the Aboitiz Commercial Corp., a joint venture company owned by Ayala Land and the Anflo Group.

TEA/Wood

SHRIMP in Farrer's Wonderfoods

CHIVE Tai Peng's famous soup dumplings

FORT San Domingo, a must-see historical site

A thousand and one . . .

From page H4

Memorable moments.

Food trip

A large fraction of the almost five days we stayed in Taiwan was spent eating good food. There's Red Oyster Restaurant (list of fives the best hygienic dishes. Ding Tai Feng restaurant (rated by the New York Times as one of the top 10 gourmet restaurants in the world) offers the best dim sum and soup dumplings in town.

Our tour was capped with a delightful dinner at Tung Hua, about an hour from Taipei (at the time) and a half-hour's worth of evening after a day tour, this is where you can relax and enjoy a hot spring bath.

Our stay in Taiwan was even made more memorable because of the two-star accommodations we experienced in two of its best hotels: Miramar Hotel in Taipei (www.miramarhotel.com.tw) and Ambassador Prince Hotel in Panlin County both within five minutes from Kaohsiung and Taipei.

Inland travel is best done by train. With the opening of the Taiwan High Speed Rail, travelers can now easily take a day trip between Kaohsiung and Taipei.

The familiarization trip to Taiwan was made possible by Taiwan Tourism Bureau and Cebu Pacific. CEB flies from Manila to Taipei five times a week each the lowest promo fare round-trip for Tax Fare of P5,499 (inclusive to Taipei). For cheaper rate and bookings, visit www.cebupacificair.com or call 7820888 or (632) 2383888.

Contemporary Chinese Bistro soon in the Philippines

THE P.F. CHANG'S BRAND SET TO TANTALIZE FILIPINO TASTE BUDS

Chinese cuisine is close to the Filipino heart. Most of the Philippines's Chinese blood is mostly cooking, and Manila being popularly the Chinese cuisine capital of the country, it's only natural that the Philippines is one of the first countries outside the United States to have a P.F. Chang's Chinese Bistro restaurant. The first P.F. Chang's Bistro is set to open in the Philippines in the coming year, making it the second country outside the United States to have a P.F. Chang's Chinese Bistro restaurant. The restaurant, which boasts a contemporary dining experience in the Filipino food scene. The restaurant, which boasts a contemporary dining experience in the Filipino food scene. The restaurant, which boasts a contemporary dining experience in the Filipino food scene.

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FIELD RESIDENCES

A SUBURBAN SANCTUARY IN THE SOUTH

A thousand and one thrills in Taiwan

By Belle Bandoc-Roberto

TAIPEI WAS COMFORTING WITH its moderately warm weather as opposed to the 11 degrees Celsius climate that had been reported days before our trip to Taiwan.

Everyone in our group was quite surprised to experience the unexpected Taiwan climate as most of us brought winter clothes (gardening wool and even parka boots!) only to realize that plain shirts and shorts were just fitting for the weather.

The plane ride to Taipei took us a bit more than two hours. The Philippines and Taiwan are very close geographically. Only about 250 km of watery separates Kaohsiung from the Philippines' islands of Batanes.

Taiwan is the largest island of the Republic of China in East Asia and is rich in natural resources.

It is famous for its traditional festivals, fine cuisine and hot springs. Its capital, Taipei, is formed like a basin, surrounded as it is by legendary mountains.

We were told the best time to visit Taiwan is during its traditional Chinese festival celebrations, including its annual Lantern Festival. So when Echo Pacific and Taiwan Tourism Bureau organized a familiarization tour to Taiwan, they made it a point to include the festival in the itinerary.

Cheap! Country (about four-hour bus drive or one-and-a-half-hour train ride from Taipei) was the host city this time, for the biggest festival celebration.

The Lantern Festival marks the end of the Chinese New Year. It is celebrated in numerous places around Taiwan with paper-lantern exhibits, entertainment programs and street parades.

We were awestruck by the beauty before us. The "lighting of the huge, Chinese sailing-themed lantern in the form of a tiger was the highlight of the festival, accompanied by fireworks display.

Lanterns of all shapes, sizes and colors, created by professional and amateur lantern-makers, were fabulous. The elaborate lanterns seen by large audiences, traditional, religious, innovative and funny.

It was amazing how bright the entire city was switched on artificially. In lanterns. What was even more amazing was the diversity of the people who came to observe a Chinese tradition, it drew a crowd of around 100,000.

The event was graced by Ghazi Mayor Hsiung Ming Hsiao, Prime Minister Wu Den yi and Minister of Communications Wu Ge Sao. Cultural performances by various performers around Asia were executed.

THE LIGHTING of the huge, Chinese sailing-themed lantern in the form of a tiger is the highlight of the Lantern Festival, accompanied by fireworks display. PHOTOS BY BELLE BANDOC

TEA plantation, Shan Lu Farm

The tour

Our four-day tour included a trip to the National Palace Museum (NPM), one of Taipei's major attractions. Here, we had a chance to read more about the Chinese culture and view art reproductions. The second and third floors had the old masters' paintings and a section on calligraphy.

NPM has evolved into a fully-modernized museum. It houses the world's largest collection of priceless Chinese art treasures, one which spans China's nearly 5000-year history. Most of the museum's 620,000 art objects were part of the Chinese imperial collection, which began over 1,000 years ago in the early Song dynasty.

During our visit, the museum was packed with locals, students and parents tagging along their children. I was told, they would stay there the whole day—almost the same length of time Filipino families would hang out at malls nowadays. It's amazing how these people make time to learn their own history and culture.

Other attractions

Dazaihai Old Street is home to a great mix of shops offering a wide range of items from souvenirs to children's clothes. There are also jewelry shops that sell "real" jade.

You'll also find food stalls selling local dishes such as dumplings, Agei (fried-tofu puffs), beef soup, among others.

Meanwhile, Fisherman's Wharf, a multi-purpose leisure fishing port developed by the Taipei County Government, is a perfect venue for families. There are magnificent floating piers and a spacious park, where families can spend quality time. At twilight, this is the best place to have a view of the sunset.

If you want shopping with great bargains, just right across Danshui MRT station is the most popular night market in Taipei, Shilin Night Market, where you can find scores selling clothes, accessories at very low prices.

The island-country's traditional Lantern Festival is just one of its many feasts that combine culture and cuisine

COLORFUL, beautifully designed lantern

FISHERMAN'S Wharf is a popular place for families and lovers.

A large food area at the corner offers local dishes which you can enjoy—oyster crackers, sausage wrapped in glutinous rice, seafood pancakes, among others.

Taiwan's pride

Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall houses relics, including the collection of books by Chiang Kai-shek, Taiwan's father.

The hall also features traditional Chinese paintings by Madame Chiang, wife of Chiang Kai-shek, as well as collections donated by people of Taiwan and foreign guests.

A visit to Taipei wouldn't be complete without going to the city's pride, Taipei 101. It's the world's tallest building with 101 stories that feature high-speed elevators rated by Guinness as the fastest in the world (60 floors at 27 seconds). It houses high-end shops and a food theater. Taiwan souvenir shops can also be bought here but at a much higher rate, of course.

Our last day was spent in a mountain resort, about four-hour bus drive from Taipei, Alishan National Scenic Recreation Area in Chiayi County.

Famous among tourists is the tea plantation called Shan Lu Farm. Many tourists come here for a taste of the famous oolong tea. The restaurant owned by Shen Le Farm offers delectable yet healthy dishes such as Tea-Steeped Pork, Wasabi Tofu and assorted green vegetables.

The best time to visit this town is during March and April for the cherry

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CHIANG Kai-shek Memorial Hall has four huge exhibition halls and an arc corridor where famous artists usually hold exhibits. The auditorium is open for seminars and lectures.

IN THIS ISSUE
■ It wasn't a politico's wife who got the coveted Birkin /H1

Sunday LIFESTYLE

A toast to the various roles we women play

Of the many I have played, being a bride was, hands down, my Oscar-winning performance

TESSA! Tessa Prieto-Valdes

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CEBU belles Maan Nga Tio, Jennifer Norman Tseng, Celine Ngo Chonghson, Serendipity Inc. partners Abigail Ngo and Marcie Alemania, Josie Uy and Cindy Lim

GREY Del Rosario wedding gowns Dr. Ernie and Nitzi Tarcon, Theresa and Jaime McCarrie, Tessa and Dennis Valdes and Lala Tan Sio and Josef Sioco

NEWLYWEDS Candice and Rony del Rosario

A toast to the various roles we women play

From page 2

PROUD Isidro Hernan Grey with proxy daughter Candice

GLOWING bride Candice Grey del Rosario and twin mom Josjane Grey

"REVEAL" fashion show at the Waterfront Hotel, Cebu: A model, Marvie Alemania, featured designer Ronald Enrico, Giselle Sanchez, Sea Princess, Abigail Ngo and Nicolette Gan Yu of Serendipity Inc., and makeup artist Enrico Lingao-Ingan

HIGHLY rich collection of "Reveal" fashion show designer Ronald Enrico

wedding 15 years ago.

Unfortunately, three days my wedding role seems to have shifted to being a missing I have played the role four times, and each time I am horrified to think I am now in the older segment of the supporting cast.

'Mrang' role

My latest unsung role was as the wedding of football fanatics Candice Grey and Avery del Rosario. Candice is the daughter of Newsman said my late Marianne (author Marjane Grey). My fellow unsung was Dr. Vicki Belo.

The beautiful wedding reception at White Spoon had a magical setting thanks to giant palm trees supplied by landscape contractor Rodrigo Sanchez. His key has also been working on providing my garden for the upcoming book of Liz Banos and photographer Lava Tetsuo.

Walking down the aisle ahead of Candice was exciting. I was in my stylized unsung gown, made by young and talented Cebu-based designer Ronald Enrico. The gown debuted in his fashion show, "Reveal," just the week before the wedding.

The "Reveal" show, held at the Waterfront Cebu Hotel, was also the grand launch of Bella Ange Pret-a-Couture by Belo.

Humble comedienne Giselle Sanchez and I hosted the event, attended by the crown of Cebu's fashion set. Beautiful Ms. parlors Enrico Lingao-Ingan was in charge of the models' makeup and hair. His good friends Abigail Ngo, Nicolette Gan Yu and Marvie Alemania of Serendipity Inc. were the event coordinators.

Ronald is a master at incorporating visual, by scanning and impeccable detailing in his creations. The latest extender gowns are masterpieces. Check out the collection at www.ronaldenrico.multiply.com and www.ralphpapenfuss.angelfire.

Cebu is always a special place for me because of the warm and friendly Cebuanos,

SEA PRINCESS with the female members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

who deliciously fresh food, and because my biggest interior design project to socio-open there, the Hotel Elizabeth Cebu. I have been down a number of times in the past months, with owners Art and Beth Fernando, and we are all looking forward to the grand opening.

When we are done with the bride bit, on another's gift get back to the wedding unsung role. In my case, that means hosting events, especially when there is a charity angle to them. Recently, Pinky Marquez and I co-hosted a historic affair involving thousands of women.

Kick-off

As part of Dove's 15th anniversary line-up of activities, the brand joined hands with the Philippine Commission on Women and the City of Taguig in kick-off the annual Women's Month celebrations at the Star Boulders Global City. Over 3,000 women participated in the whole-day event, highlighted by the announcement of the Magna Carta of Women's Rights.

"The day started off with a blink for Heaven's Rights, led by icons Ritika Thamrons, Pinky Marquez, Nicole Scimeche, Boys Manangquil, Sara Black, Pia Magdaleno, Marichelle Santos-Pe, Thirsty Cruz, Susan Campos and Chiqui Hollenbach-Soho. Dove ambassadors. Dr. Dove are really women of achievers who embody "Dove at You — Really Beautiful."

It's hard to imagine that Dove has had a decade pronouncing beauty in our country is does this so well, promoting a positive self-image through campaigns that spotlight is non-important or real women. All those years, it has worked to encourage women to accept, celebrate and nurture how beautiful we all are.

Sometime during the Dove day my mobile phone got lost, but thank goodness there were so many super women around to help me out. Thanks so much to Senate Blogger of Bridges, Nikka Abes of Nokia and Ana Stagral of Smart (either) for no time at all, I had another Nokia N97 Mini with all my contacts restored.

Tributes are truly moments as multi-making. One energetic lady is Pia cruiser Cebu Allure), who recently celebrated her 18th wedding anniversary with loving husband Butch. They were among close friends and family in an intimate party at classy Sisoy; there was dancing, karaoke and laughter.

Cebu has also been busy organizing the annual Pala Polo Cup. If you're a Polo aficionado, catch it today at the Manila Polo Club.

Tour of Hope

And if you're the sort of woman who pushes more athletic rides, gear up for the Bike for Hope. The Tour of Hope Philippines 2010, "365: Fighting Cervical Cancer in Full Circle," is all set from March 20-24. The cyclists will be riding from Makati City to Baguio City to help spread the word on the fight against the disease.

Originally from Thailand, this tour started locally three years ago with about 45 cyclists, who island from Vigan to Subic Bay. Last year, there were 70 cyclists that rode from Alabang to Camarines Sur. I was so proud to have been part of the Camsur leg, and thanks to generous friends, we were able to thank up a sizable donations.

"The Tour of Hope Philippines is a joint project of Breastcancer, Cervical Cancer Prevention, Network, ChanceforMother Philippines, Creative Juice and Gener Marketing, in strategic partnership with Team David's Salon.

For info, contact tourofhope@gmail.com or text 09174923550. Their websites are www.facebook.com and www.pinoyfitness.com.

While on many rides and there for on occasion, my favorite role is still a traditional one—the mommy role. Proxy my eldest, Bryan, is my youngest, Adriana, it's been a two-decade role that I am still working to perfect. Truly the role of a lifetime.

Email the author at smpetrucci@inquirer.com.ph.

TIMMY Cruz, Raya Manangquil

PINKY Marquez

KATE TINGA with Unilever Philippines managing director for Health and Wellness Gilbert Simpao and category head for Skin Paul Kuiterberg

CHIVE Badiola, Cris Albert, Gerry Katigbak and Wanda Lazaroffen

BUTCH Albert, Joan Ligaria, Louie Ismael

HOTEL Elizabeth owner Beth Fernando, stunning daughter Jose and her niece Jolby

CEBU'S exclusive Margie Lhuillier with her daughter Claudine Ugarte Ciarra and proxy @SMBaghyan

Bella Ange proxy model Nigel Isaac with her lovely mom Michelle Bandoc

The 'economical' pancit canton

Comfort food that's easy to prepare—even on a tight budget

By Annelie S. Tayao

PinoyDish Number 6: Pancit Canton

Conrado de Quiros

NO Pinoy celebration is complete without the pancit. It's a "must" dish, especially for birthdays, since, as the popular belief goes, it's a symbol of long life.

Today there are as many ways of preparing the pancit as there are provinces (or provinces) here. The pancit is part of every region's culinary heritage: a pint of every region's unique palate—Moldova, the Malabigas lens, Tagalog style rotisserie, pancit bakhak from Quezon and pancit Vigan, among others.

But there is one variation that's usually the party favorite: Pancit Canton.

Made with canton noodles, long egg noodles that have been pre-cooked and dried, the Pancit Canton is one of the lesser Chinese noodles dishes to prepare. (The term "pancit" comes from "pian i sit," which translates to "something conveniently cooked fast.")

"Pancit Canton is economical," says Penk Cheng, the cake stylist of The Pastry Bin whose work has graced major events here and abroad, including the 2008 Beijing Olympics. "Depending on your budget, that's how you decide what to put in your Pancit Canton."

To give Pancit Canton more flavor, add Knorr Oyster Sauce.

Cheng has been in the baking industry for the past 24 years. Although she took up economics, her passion for cooking and baking led her to where she is now—at the peak of the baking industry. "And I love food, that's the bottomline," she says.

Cheng is also a mother, and finds that Pancit Canton is the best dish to serve when her kids have friends over. "It's so easy to prepare!" she says.

The dish is most versatile — there are no "fixed" ingredients in Pancit Canton, which makes it easier to give it that Pinoy flavor, even if it's a Chinese dish. With the cured noodles, one can mix in chicken, pork, beef, seafood and different kinds of vegetables, depending on one's taste, and, of course, one's budget. Cheng prefers a complete mix of meat, seafood and vegetables for her Pancit Canton — a complete meal in itself.

"But I think what makes Pancit Canton truly Pinoy is our use of calamansi with it," says Cheng. Alternately, one can also use Knorr Lime Pearler to add flavor to the dish.

Aside from being a convenient dish, Pancit Canton evokes memories, as for ex-boxing linguini columnist Conrado de Quiros is concerned—memories of his hometown, Naga City.

"I come from a poor family in a small town in Naga city and it was a treat for us to be able to eat out," says De Quiros. "When I was a kid the popular restaurants were Chinese. Our parents used to take us to this place called New China, where they have very good Pancit Canton. I still told there every time I go home."

In fact, he says, the waiters don't even need to ask him for his order. "They already know that when I go there, all I want is the Pancit Canton."

A complete meal, Pancit Canton is perfect for De Quiros, who isn't a big eater and has, for a year now, stopped eating meat. Sometimes, he says, he even forgets to eat.

"That happens especially when I get wrapped up in my writing," he says.

He confess dishes that are "losing but hey" but his ultimate comfort food is still Pancit Canton. "As a stand-alone meal, Pancit Canton is enough, but sometimes I take it with other dishes," he says. "But the thing about it is it's comfort food—masarap pero hindi mabigat (it tastes good but isn't impressive)."

Pancit Canton is one of the featured dishes of Unilever Foodsolutions' (UFS) "Sooo Pinoy" campaign, a movement that aims to find the people's favorite Pinoy dish through online and SMS voting. It's a joint venture with the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Department of Tourism. The campaign is also geared toward promoting and enhancing Filipino cuisine.

"Sooo Pinoy" showcases these three new products from UFS: Knorr Bango Kaunti Manis, a modern barbecue sauce; Knorr Oyster Sauce, a sauce of Chinese origin that's been enriched to fit the Pinoy taste; and Knorr Lime Pearler, an alternative to calamansi or datayo, which you can try with your Pancit Canton.

In these tough times, it's wise to be practical. Enjoy a full meal without having to worry about your budget with a plate of Pancit Canton—or be creative and whip up a batch of your own!

Log on to http://mms3.inquirer.net/soooopinoy/ to vote for your favorite Pinoy dish.

The national search for the ultimate Pinoy dish

Penk Cheng

Pancit Canton

Classification:
Total Yield/ Servings: 10
Portion Size: 100g
Preparation Time: 20 mins
Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:
60g Oil
60g Garlic
50g Onion
100g Shrimp
60ml KNORR OYSTER SAUCE
500ml Water
50g Cornstarch slurry
10ml KNORR LIQUID SEASONING
100g Assorted vegetables sliced and blanched
400g Pancit Canton deepfried

Procedure:
Cook garlic and onion in oil.
Add in shrimp and Knorr Oyster Sauce.
Add in water.
Thicken with cornstarch slurry.
Season with Knorr Liquid Seasoning.
Mix in assorted vegetables.
Pour over fried pancit canton.

To vote your favorite Sooo Pinoy Dish, log on to www.inquirer.net

Presenting the Top 10 Restaurants in the Philippines with the best Pancit Canton

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On Aryanna: Fuchsia quilted ballet flats in left by Sugarkids

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernie G. Velarde

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Pacquiao vs Clottey on TFC

FILIPINOS in the Middle East, Europe and Australia can watch the Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao-Joshua Clottey match live from the Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, via the Filipino Channel (TFC) today. An added bonus is a local assessment of the bout by sports columnist-commentator Jolli Mauco and boxing analyst Ed Tolentino.

CLICK!

Maricel's first project on TV5: A homecoming

MARICEL Soriano, stars in a showcase series on TV5.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Arnold Almacen

IN A LOT OF WAYS, MOVING TO TV5 was a homecoming of sorts for actress Maricel Soriano.

For her first project with the revitalized network, she returns to a format she popularized in ABS-CBN in the 1990s.

Maricel is headlining the "TV5 Star Drama Specials"—with five episodes to be mugged by five leading directors. (After Maricel, TV5 will tap other award-winning actors to top bill the series.)

"I feel blessed that TV5 gave me this opportunity ... Thankful na binigyan nila ako (that they adopted me) ... said minded to act in the drama-anthology format again," she told Inquirer. "I did Maricel Drama for 10 years and I missed doing it."

"The Maricel Soriano Drama Special" ran from 1988 to 1997 on ABS-CBN.

Varied roles

For the TV5 show, which will run from the end of March to April, she is set to tackle a variety of roles in just as varied genres.

For the first episode ("Dalawa ang Bituin Ko"), which reunites her with fellow Regal star Roderick Paulate, she does comedy, under the direction of Jose Javier Reyes.

The second episode is horror, under di-

MARICEL 2/2

JUDY Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo

Juday's manager requesting twins

By Marinel R. Cruz

"OOO! IM IN LOVE! I'M A GRANDMA!"

This was how actress Judy Ann Santos broke the news of her pregnancy to talent manager Ally Lorenzo on Friday morning.

Lorenzo's reply: "Mas happy ako (I'm happier if you have twins). Where you go on vacation next month, daghagan n'ko ya!"

In the succeeding show "Eat ... Bulaga!" Ryan Agoncillo, Judy Ann's husband, announced that his wife was two months and four days pregnant. The

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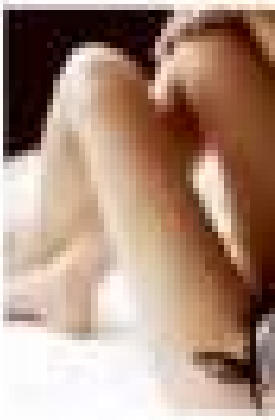

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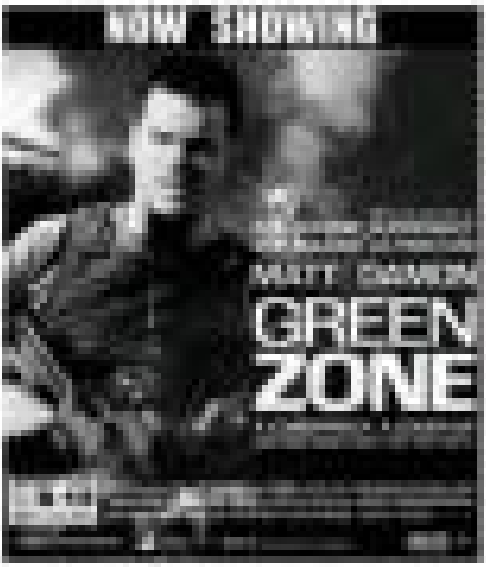

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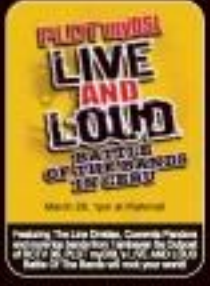

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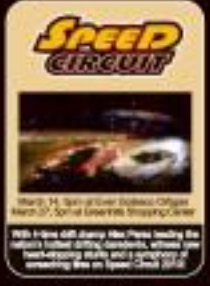

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ENTERTAINMENT

DENZEL with Dan Inosanto

Denzel Washington praises his Fil-Am trainer

LOS ANGELES—DENZEL WASHINGTON credits Dan Inosanto, the venerable Filipino-American martial arts expert, for helping him prepare for the lean warrior he plays in "The Book of Eli."

At the film's martial arts trainer, Inosanto trained the headstrong and Golden Globe-winning actor for eight months. Dan, who was the late Bruce Lee's protégé, is a highly regarded martial arts figure in the US and around the world. One of several Hollywood actors who counts him as his mentor is Forest Whitaker.

In the post-apocalyptic western "The Book of Eli," Denzel's character is likened to a John Wayne cowboy hero and an Akira Kurosawa samurai. In a war-wasted world peopled by soldiers and gangs, Denzel's

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rahoy T. Negrales

Eli has a rare copy of the Bible which he sees as humanity's only hope. The action-adventure, directed by the Hughes twin brothers (Albert and Allen), also stars Gary Oldman, Mila Kunis, Jennifer Beals, Michael Gambon, Ray Stevenson and Tom Waits.

Denzel said his son, John David Washington, convinced him to star in the film. The proud father joked: "He (John David) is a no-producer. He's got to work his way up. And he didn't get paid. I said, 'You get crumbs but no money.'"

"He really believed in the material," Denzel said. "It was a very good script. It was more than just the typical action movie. It had substance and something to say about good and evil...the spiritual world. John was also the one who talked me into doing 'Training Day' and 'American Gangster' as I think he's done for three."

The movie's theological metaphors prompted Denzel, who is a devout Christian, to also talk about spirituality in this flick.

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Denzel Washington praises his Fil-Am trainer

How has Bun helped you prepare for this physically challenging role?

Bun is one of the greatest martial artists in the world. He's a great friend. At 70 plus years old, he travels almost every weekend somewhere around the world to teach classes. Gina's young students make him, who are in their 30s, ask about how they can't catch up with him. He'll do a lung in class at 10, a nipoleto class at 10:30, lunch another class and then, by six and then. He proves that you're really as young as you feel.

One of the things I learned from training with Bun and which I ought to apply but I'm lazy to do is stretch. Great athletes, from Ancient Abdul-Jabbar to Steve Carlton, stretched a lot. It extends your ability to do things athletically. By the time we were about to shoot, I was ready.

What is it about this film's script that you embraced?

There was one version of the script early on that I read that I wasn't interested in. A studio had a version written because they didn't want too much spirituality. They said it wasn't sell. But it was like starting around what the story is about. Then I got hold of Gary Whitta's original script. There were actually four or five versions of the script. Our process was taking the best from those versions and reworking the material.

How familiar are you with the Bible?

I'm learning more. I'm completing my third time reading through the Bible now.

What has resonated with you the most?

He used to say grace over the food and you say, "Amen." "God is love" was like one word. Over the years, I've started saying it slower and really understanding that God is love. No matter what your religion is or what book you read, if you don't understand that, then you haven't learned anything. God is love—not my God is love and yours isn't.

Your character Eli's driving force is his faith. What is yours?

My faith, family and work. I get so much joy from watching my children.

What are your next projects?

I'm going to Broadway Viola Davis and I am going to tackle "Fences," which is a great American play.

I finished shooting "Unstoppable" with Tony Scott directing. Tony kept telling me, "You have to do this." He wants to play with Gina. He's blowing them up.

He proves you're as young as you feel

Email the columnist at renegade_1106@yahoo.com

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

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Regine pockmarked and pimpled

REGINE Velasquez as Sampaguita in her latest teleserye "Dito"

LAST MARCH 1, REGINE VELASQUEZ's latest teleserye "Dito," started airing on GMA 7. Many were drawn not precisely by the series, but by the start of a new series isn't such a big deal. What makes "Dito" stand out, however, is its unconventional storyline, as well as its "Ugly Betty"-ish premise.

That's right, Regine's character in the series is a pockmarked and pimpled probinsyana, who is decidedly unattractive, physically and by most fashionable and pimpled standards—almost an ugly duckling character twist.

Jessica U. Soriano

Pity, sympathy, comedy

Of course, she will later turn into a svelte and lovely swan in a few more episodes, but before she does, she's the butt of all jokes and ends insulted and belittled. That starting a high level of viewer pity, sympathy—and comedy.

After viewing the series' first episode, we're all primed for the show's ranking—and possibly hers, for its comedy transforming Regine into such a visual shocker.

Earlier, too, in Regine herself her opening with such relish to let us utterly "uglified."

Major facelift (and make) must-would (where we exaggerate in the "transcoming" process, but Regine apparently has no such qualms.

"Dito" is also noteworthy for its unusual setting—the Batanes Islands (possibly more than it's the island TV warrior's first "Encantadia"). That may or not be absolutely correct, but the show's cinematography is a welcome, because a while country to local TV series' scuffling, predictable, mapsand-cobwebs look.

Back story

What about the show itself? Does it succeed as entertainment, perhaps with some aspirational and fantastic story and storytelling that can be good assurance?

The first take-out need up a lot of time setting up the series' back story, with a lot of characters introduced in the first few episodes. It's a good thing that, in subsequent telecasts, Regine was able to inhabit her pathetic character with a minimum of vulnerability and pathetic innocence that our hearts almost break.

But the series has too many characters introduced too early to become the delightful viewing experience it's striving to be. As for its vaunted musical factor, it really isn't all that successfully pulled off, so we hope it can be more organically and creatively realized in forthcoming episodes.

Regine Velasquez is clearly giving "Dito" everything she's got, but if the show's other actors and crafters don't do their share, even her prodigious efforts may not be enough.